

Ironquill

# JOHN BROWN

*By Ironquill*



States are not great  
Except as men may make them;  
Men are not great except they do and dare.  
But States, like men,  
Have destinies that take them—  
That bear them on, not knowing why or where.

The WHY repels  
The philosophic searcher—  
The WHY and WHERE all questionings defy,  
Until we find,  
Far back in youthful nurture,  
Prophetic facts that constitute the WHY.

All merit comes  
From braving the unequal;  
All glory comes from daring to begin.  
Fame loves the State  
That, reckless of the sequel,  
Fights long and well, whether it lose or win.

Than in our State  
No illustration apter  
Is seen or found of faith and hope and will.  
Take up her story:  
Every leaf and chapter  
Contains a record that conveys a thrill.

And there is one  
Whose faith, whose fight, whose falling,  
Fame shall placard upon the walls of time.  
He dared begin—  
Despite the unavailing,  
He dared begin, when failure was a crime.

When over Africa  
Some future cycle  
Shall sweep the lake-gemmed uplands with its surge;  
When, as with trumpet  
Of Archangel Michael,  
Culture shall bid a colored race emerge;

When busy cities  
There in constellations,  
Shall gleam with spires and palaces and domes,  
With marts wherein  
Is heard the noise of nations;  
With summer groves surrounding stately homes—

There, future orators  
To cultured freeman  
Shall tell of valor, and recount with praise  
Stories of Kansas,  
And of Lacedæmon—  
Cradles of freedom, then of ancient days.

C. L. Dresser,

Ironquill's verses have an established place in Western literature. Since the Civil War the quaint pen name has been a household word. James Whitcomb Riley celebrated his admiration for these rhymes in a poem that ended:

" And then she made me read the thing, and found my specs and all;  
And I jist leant back there, I jing! my chair against the wall.  
And read and read, and read and read, all to myse'f, ontill  
I lit the lamp and went to bed with 'Rhymes of Ironquill.' "









# SOME OF THE RHYMES OF IRONQUILL

(A BOOK OF MOODS)

*"I'll wear Arcturus for a bosom-pin"*

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14th, Revised, Edition

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## PREFACE

When back into the alphabet  
The critic's satires shall have crumbled,  
When into dust his hand is humbled,  
One verse of mine may linger yet.



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SOME OF THE RHYMES OF  
IRONQUILL





# RHYMES OF IRONQUILL

---

## THE WASHERWOMAN'S SONG

I N a very humble cot,  
In a rather quiet spot,  
In the suds and in the soap,  
Worked a woman full of hope;  
Working, singing, all alone,  
In a sort of undertone:  
“With the Savior for a friend,  
He will keep me to the end.”

Sometimes happening along,  
I had heard the semi-song,  
And I often used to smile,  
More in sympathy than guile;  
But I never said a word  
In regard to what I heard,  
As she sang about her friend  
Who would keep her to the end.

## Rhymes of Ironquill

Not in sorrow nor in glee  
Working all day long was she,  
    As her children, three or four,  
    Played around her on the floor;  
But in monotones the song  
She was humming all day long:  
    “With the Savior for a friend,  
    He will keep me to the end.”

It's a song I do not sing,  
For I scarce believe a thing  
    Of the stories that are told  
    Of the miracles of old;  
But I know that her belief  
Is the anodyne of grief,  
    And will always be a friend  
    That will keep her to the end.

Just a trifle lonesome she,  
Just as poor as poor could be;  
    But her spirits always rose,  
    Like the bubbles in the clothes,  
And, though widowed and alone,  
Cheered her with the monotone,  
    Of a Savior and a friend  
    Who would keep her to the end.

## The Washerwoman's Song

3

I have seen her rub and scrub,  
On the washboard in the tub,  
    While the baby, sopped in suds,  
    Rolled and tumbled in the duds;  
Or was paddling in the pools,  
With old scissors stuck in spools;  
    She still humming of her friend  
    Who would keep her to the end.

Human hopes and human creeds  
Have their root in human needs;  
    And I should not wish to strip  
    From that washerwoman's lip  
Any song that she can sing,  
Any hope that songs can bring;  
    For the woman has a friend  
    Who will keep her to the end.

## AN OPEN LETTER TO IRONQUILL

DEAR SIR: I have read again and again, with indescribable pleasure and sadness, your "Washerwoman's Song"—pleasure, because it is really beautiful, and voices correctly the joy of Christ's poor ones; sadness, because you say you are shut out from a hope which, though not always so bright and cheerful, is worth more than all else this world affords. You will pardon me for addressing you in this public manner, for I know that many men of intellect and culture occupy positions not dissimilar to your own, and I hope in this way to make some suggestions which will reach both you and them, and not be inappropriate to the subject, whether they shall prove valuable or useless. Reading between the lines, I think I can see a thorough interest, a sort of inquiry, a desire to possess a hope like, or at least equal to, that of the heroine of your song. If this were not so, I could scarcely interest myself sufficiently to write you, for I confess I have but little patience with that class of criticism that flippantly brushes aside the mysteries of God, Christ, and im-

mortality as fit only for the contemplation of "women and children." To me these mysteries are the profoundest depths. I have no plummet heavy enough, nor line long enough, to reach the bottom. I may push them aside for a time, while other things engross me, but they come unbidden again and again across my path. It is so with you.

What is God? It may be sufficient for some to answer, "God is a spirit, infinite," etc.; but this answer gives but very little light to me. And yet I know that I am amenable to laws definite and certain, with penalties positive and fixed, which I never made or agreed to have made, and which I can never change, even in the most minute particular. Whence these laws? Is nature, with its exactitude, a chance? Who believes that? I have doubted whether there is a God, but I never disbelieved it. Bringing all my reason to bear upon it, I find that the best I can do is to dismiss the doubt as far as I can, and accept the fact.

Still but little is gained practically. The laws are known, and the consequences of disobedience are also known. What matters it whence the laws come? I have never seen God; I shall not see Him with these eyes. I do not understand the methods of His government. They seem to be harsh and severe as often as they are kind and merciful. Death

takes, all too soon, the gentle mother from her untrained child, as well as the worthless vagabond of whom the world is well rid. You do not understand it any better than I, but the fact remains. To know, then, that there is a God, is nothing to us, unless it be a foundation upon which we can build something more.

Who then was Christ of whom the washerwoman sung day after day?

That such a man existed is not doubted. Think over all the best men you ever knew, and then select the very best, and tell me if he does not fall too far short for comparison. There are as good men living now as ever lived—men fully equal to Daniel, Isaiah, or John, and far better than Moses, David, or Peter. Among the best, Christ stands alone; and yet he was the boldest impostor that ever appeared on the earth, if he was not divine. Christ was and is a fact. He comes across our way, and must be disposed of. He was either the exemplification of God to men, or a most transparent fraud and hypocrite. I have doubted whether he was “God manifest in the flesh,” but I never disbelieved it. If he was divine, then—

“The stories that are told  
Of the miracles of old”

are easy of belief.

As to the proofs of immortality, you have doubtless pondered them well. They rest partly on God and Christ, and partly on the unsatisfying nature of this life. It is said that the average human life is thirty-four years. Who can say that it is worth living if this is all? Pleasure and pain, joy and sorrow, light and darkness, are about as equally distributed as day and night. Who that has lived it would ask to live it again in just the same way, and without any benefit from the experience already passed? Infancy prattles into childhood, childhood glides into youth, youth leaps into manhood, and manhood goes grudgingly into old age; and in each succession the dreamer anticipates that the next will bring something more substantial and satisfactory, but the anticipation is never realized, and the substantial and satisfactory never come. Do you not find it so? I have doubted my immortality, but I never disbelieved it.

If you ask me why the truth as to these momentous matters is not more clearly revealed, or why we were not given reason and judgment to fathom and understand them, I answer, I do not know. But that does not dispose of them. If I were to ask you why you have not reason and judgment to decide at once, and wisely, the ten thousand questions of every-day life, your answer would be, "I do not know." But

nevertheless you go on reasoning, doubting, deciding, and doubting after you decide, fortunate indeed if you are generally right, and certain indeed to be often wrong.

I have written thus far so as to be able to say that when you write "I scarce believe a thing," your true position is, that you doubt whether the woman has a real foundation upon which to build her song. And if I am right in this, then further to suggest that there is nothing unusual or unreasonable in such a doubt. Nay, more: when reason, judgment, and all other faculties and means for arriving at truth are imperfect, it seems to me that a perfect faith is unattainable, and doubt becomes a necessity. To questions like these, and many others, there is no absolute demonstration here and now.

Did it ever occur to you that the woman did not always have that serene faith which you ascribe to her? Do you not know that she often wondered, and wondering, doubted, not, perhaps, whether there is a God, but whether He is merciful, or even just? Do you not know that to her it is an unsolved problem why she was left alone to support four children at one dollar a day, when you could make twenty dollars a day at work less burdensome and exhaustive? If she had called on you, when passing her door, to explain this problem to her poor under-



standing, what could you have said? She probably knew it was as inexplicable to you as to her, and therefore did not ask. There is an answer, but neither you nor I occupy a plane sufficiently exalted fully to comprehend and speak it—"Even so, Father, for so it seemeth good in thy sight."

There are two classes of persons who never have doubts: the one, who see through these mysteries at a glance, or think they do; and the other, "who never had a dozen thoughts in all their lives."

The washerwoman sung away most of hers in her beautiful song; and shall we, who cannot sing, linger about Doubting Castle until old Giant Despair entices us into his gloomy prison-house? No; for while we see that there is doubt in reason, we will hold that there must be reason in doubt, and it must itself be dragged into the light, subjected to the severest scrutiny, and made our help rather than our ruin.

Galileo called doubt the "father of invention."

"Who never doubted never half believed—where doubt, there truth is. It is its shadow."

One not given much to doubt, and never to despair, has said: "Now we see through a glass darkly." But there is a light—that light is Christ as revealed in the Scriptures. Blot it out, and the darkness is to me impenetrable.

I have said nothing of the unseen help that comes to the weak of faith. Though mysterious, I believe in it. Your heroine knew of it. The heathen seem to grasp it as if by instinct, and have crystallized it into the maxim, "The gods help them that help themselves." Faith will grow if cultivated by good works, and the unseen help will be a friend that will keep us to the end.

Very truly yours,

N. C. McFARLAND.

Washington, D. C.

## KRITERION

[*A reply to Judge McFarland*]

I SEE the spire,  
I see the throng,  
I hear the choir,  
I hear the song;  
I listen to the anthem, while  
It pours its volume down the aisle;  
I listen to the splendid rhyme  
That, with a melody sublime,  
Tells of some far-off, fadeless clime—  
Of man and his finality,  
Of hope, and immortality.

Oh, theme of themes!  
Are men mistaught?  
Are hopes like dreams,  
To come to naught?  
Is all the beautiful and good  
Delusive and misunderstood?  
And has the soul no forward reach?  
And do indeed the facts impeach

## Rhymes of Ironquill

The theories the teachers teach ?  
And is this immortality  
Delusion, or reality ?

What hope reveals  
Mind tries to clasp,  
But soon it reels  
With broken grasp.

No chain yet forged on anvil's brink  
Was stronger than its weakest link;  
And are there not along this chain  
Imperfect links that snap in twain  
When caught in logic's tensile strain?  
And is not immortality  
The child of ideality ?

And yet—at times—  
We get advice  
That seems like chimes  
From paradise;  
The soul doth sometimes seem to be  
In *sunshine* which it cannot see;  
At times the spirit seems to roam  
Beyond the land, above the foam,  
Back to some half-forgotten home  
Perhaps—this immortality  
May be indeed reality.

## THE FISHER MAIDEN

THOU maiden with eyes so dreamy,  
Thou child of the waves and spray  
Thy home is beside the ocean,  
Where wearisome breakers play.  
Come, sit thee down here beside me  
And list to the words I say.

My heart is a stormy ocean,  
And out on its rocky slopes  
The turbulent waves are flinging  
The spars and the keels and ropes:—  
The wrecks of my aspirations,  
The wrecks of my stranded hopes.

My heart is an angry ocean.  
The gales, as they come and go,  
Bestrew it with wreck and ruin,  
But down in its waves below,  
The pearls and the rose-red corals  
Expectantly gleam and glow.

O! launch on this stormy ocean,  
Thou child of the waves and spray;  
Thy boat will be borne securely,  
Until, at the close of day,  
The crimson of life's last twilight  
Shall fade in the west away.

## OLD GLORY

(A SONG 1896)

FLAG of a thousand battles,  
Beautiful flag of the free;  
Waving from lake to ocean,  
Waving from sea to sea;

Outward and seaward ever,  
Daring the restless wave;  
Upward and skyward ever,  
Pride of the true and the brave.

*Old Glory, Old Glory, the world awaits thy story;  
Float on, float ever on o'er land and sea ;  
Old Glory, Old Glory, the world awaits thy story ;  
Float on, float on, thou emblem of the free.*

Flag of a thousand battles,  
Cresting the billows of fire;  
Whelming established evils,  
Raising the lowly higher;

Challenging ancient error,  
Silencing tyranny dumb,  
Gladdening and inspiring  
Hope for the years to come!

*Old Glory, Old Glory, the world awaits thy story ;  
Float on, float ever on o'er land and sea ;  
Old Glory, Old Glory, the world awaits thy story ;  
Float on, float on, thou emblem of the free.*



## THE MINNESONG

ONCE a falcon I possessed;  
And full many a knight and vassal  
Watched him from my father's castle,  
As, in gaudy ribbon dressed,  
He would seek with fiery eye  
Battle in the roomy sky,  
And return to be caressed.

Once a lover I possessed;  
On the field of battle knighted,  
And at tournaments, delighted,  
Did I watch his fiery crest.  
Woven from the silken strands  
By my own unaided hands,  
Was the baldric on his breast.

But one day my bird did soar,  
When the sky was black and stormy;  
And my knight, whose fondness for me  
Seemed as changeless as before,  
Rode away in the crusade;

## Rhymes of Ironquill

And as years successive fade,  
They return to me no more.

. . . . .

Ah! In every land and tongue—  
Loved by emperor and vassal,  
Serf in hovel, knight in castle—  
Ever old yet ever young,  
Sung until the hours grew late,  
Was the song of love and fate  
Which the minnesinger sung.

## TYPE

ALL night the sky was draped in darkness thick;  
From rumbling clouds imprisoned lightnings  
swept;  
    Into the printer's stick,  
    With energetic click,  
The ranks of type into battalions crept,  
Which formed brigades while dreaming labor slept;  
And ere dawn's crimson pennons were unfurled,  
The night-formed columns charged the waking world.

## THE KANSAS HERDER

HE rode by starlight o'er the prairies dim,  
While melancholy, with an aimless whim,  
Through trackless grass was blindly leading him.

And then he said: "Beneath the heavens' blue curve,  
There has been fate misfortune would not serve;  
There has been love disaster could not swerve."

But as he spake these words, it seemed that they  
Fell volatile, like autumn leaves, and lay  
Till zephyrs came and swept them all away.

And then he said: "O words of love, alas!  
As light as feathers, frangible as glass,  
The last to come, and yet the first to pass."

The prairie, ever echoless, could make  
No answer back. Impassible, opaque,  
The night air smothered what he wildly spake.

The prairie larks sang at the break of day;  
He heard them not, but as he lifeless lay  
He wore a smile, faint, thoughtful, far away.

## THE SERENADE

THROUGH waning light  
The angel of the night,  
With silver sickle, reaped the western stars,  
Across my sleep,  
Dreamless as well as deep,  
There came a ballad, whose remembered bars  
Brought back to me a day  
That long had passed away.

An old, old song,  
Although forgotten long,  
Brings childhood back as songs alone can bring.  
We see bright eyes,  
Behold unclouded skies;  
We re-inhale the fragrance of life's spring;  
While, as of unseen bird,  
Rustle of wing is heard.

Shall our last sleep  
Eternal stillness keep ?  
Shall pulseless dust enclose a dreamless soul ?

## Rhymes of Ironquill

Or shall we hear  
Those songs so old and dear,  
As mid tempestuous melodies there roll  
Upon our sleeping ears  
The choruses of spheres?

## THE NOW

THE charm of a love is its telling, the telling that  
goes with the giving;

The charm of a deed is its doing; the charm of a life  
is its living;

The soul of the thing is the thought; the charm of the  
act is the actor;

The soul of the fact is its truth, and the now is its  
principal factor.

The world loves the Now and the Nowist, and tests  
all assumptions with rigor;

It looks not behind it to failing, but forward to ardor  
and vigor;

It cares not for heroes who falter, for martyrs who  
hushed and recanted,

For pictures that never were painted, for harvests that  
never were planted.

The world does not care for a fragrance that never is  
lost in perfuming,

The world does not care for the blossoms that wither  
away before blooming;

The world does not care for the chimes remaining un-  
rung by the ringer,  
The world does not care for the songs unsung in the  
soul of the singer.

What use to mankind is a purpose that never shone  
forth in a doer?  
What use has the world for a loving that never had  
winner nor woer?  
The motives, the hopes and the schemes that have  
ended in idle conclusions.  
Are buried along with the failures that come in a life  
of illusions.

Away with the flimsy idea that life with a past is  
attended;  
There 's Now—only Now, and no Past—there 's never  
a past; it has ended.  
Away with its obsolete story, and all of its yesterday  
sorrow;  
There 's only to-day, almost gone, and in front of to-  
day stands to-morrow.

And hopes that are quenchless are sent us like loans  
from a generous lender,  
Enriching us all in our efforts, yet making no poorer  
the sender;



## The Now

Lightening all of our labors, and thrilling us ever and  
ever

With the ecstasy of success and the raptures of  
present endeavor.

## THE BOOK

WITH Granite once a genius bridged a stream;  
A builder once a rugged temple wrought;  
On canvas once a painter fixed a thought;  
A sculptor once in marble carved a dream;  
A queen once built a tomb, and in the scheme  
Of gold and bronze the quivering sunbeams caught;  
Then came oblivion, unseen, unsought,  
Contemptuous of thinker and of theme.

And someone wrote a book. Palace and Hall  
Are gone. Marble and bronze are dust. The fanes  
Are fallen which the sungold sought. The rook,  
At morn, caws garrulously over all.  
All! All are gone. The book alone remains.  
Man builds no structure which outlives a book.

## THE PRE-EMPTOR

WHILE turning furrows on a Kansas prairie,  
Cares half imaginary  
Come trooping through my brain, then skip away  
Like antelopes at play.

All day I watch the furrow-slices slide  
Along the mould-board steel;  
But when night comes I feel  
Along my brain strange restful fancies glide.

Although my home may be a humble shanty,  
With fittings rude and scanty,  
Each night a kind magician comes to see,  
And hand the world to me:  
I see a grand cathedral; on a hill  
I note a Moorish tower,  
And orange trees in flower —  
It is the graceful city of Seville.

The evening lights upon the ripples twinkle,  
I hear the mule-bells tinkle,  
And organs peal, and twittering mandolins,  
As fragrant night begins.

I see Giralda, in dissolving views,  
And purple shadows fade  
In glorious brocade;  
I watch the twilight of the Andaluz.

I hand the world back to my necromancer,  
And make to him no answer.  
Next day I hear the rattle just the same  
Of clevis and of hame;  
But when night comes, emerging from the dark  
I see the sunrise smile  
Upon the Campanile,  
And bronze the flying lion of St. Mark.

I gaze on ducal palaces adorning  
The Grand Canal, at morning;  
I view the ancient trophies that have come  
Torn from Byzantium;  
I see what colors Tintoretto's were;  
Upon the mole I hear  
The gaudy gondolier,  
Then—hand the world back to my sorcerer.

The griefs that flock like rabbits in a warren  
To me are wholly foreign.  
No help, no cheer, no sympathy I ask;  
I'm equal to my task.

Though small my holdings when the sun may shine,  
When evening comes my cares  
Steal from me unawares,  
And then the earth I love so much is mine.

## THE SUNSET MARMATON

O MARMATON! O Marmaton!  
From out the rich autumnal west  
There creeps a misty, pearly rest,  
As through an atmosphere of dreams.  
Along thy course, O Marmaton,  
A rich September sunset streams.  
Thy purple sheen,  
Through prairies green,  
From out the burning west is seen.  
I watch thy fine,  
Approaching line,  
That seems to flow like blood-red wine  
Fresh from the vintage of the sun.  
The spokes of steel  
And blue reveal  
The outlines of a phantom wheel,  
While airy armies, one by one,  
March out on dress-parade.  
I see unrolled,  
In blue and gold,  
The guidons where the line is made,

## Rhymes of Ironquill

And, where the lazy zephyrs strolled  
    Along thy verdant esplanade,  
I see the crested, neighing herd  
    Go plunging to the stream.  
    I hear the flying, shrieking scream  
Of startled bird.  
    The Kansas day is done.

    O Marmaton! O Marmaton!  
    Thou hast no story and no song;  
Unto the vast  
And empty past,  
In which thy former life was cast,  
    Thou dost not yet belong.  
No mountain cradle hast thou had;  
    Along thy line  
    No summits shine,  
No cliffs, no gorges, stern and sad,  
Stand in the waning twilight, clad  
    In melancholy pine.  
Thou art the even-tempered child  
Of prairies, on whose verdant wild  
Eternities have smiled.

    O Marmaton! O Marmator!  
Be patient, for thy day will come,  
And bring the bugle and the drum.

Thy fame shall like thy ripples run;  
Thou shalt be storied yet.  
Within this great  
And central State,  
The destiny of some proud day  
Upon thy banks is set.  
Artillery will sweep away  
The orchard and the prairie home,  
And while the wheat stacks redly burn,  
Armies of infantry will charge  
The lines of works along thy marge,  
While cavalry brigades will churn  
Thy frightened waters into foam.  
The spell of centuries will break,  
And thou shalt suddenly awake,  
And have a story that will make  
A nation's pulses thrill.  
And when again thy banks are still,  
No new admirer of the time  
Can say of thee in feeble rhyme:  
"O Marmaton! O Marmaton!  
Thou hast no story and no song;  
Thou hast no history of wrong;  
Unto the vast  
And empty past  
In which thy former life was cast,  
Thou dost not yet belong."

O Marmaton! O Marmaton!  
The centuries will pass along,  
And slowly, singly, one by one  
Repeat thy story and thy song.  
Thy time abide,  
O Marmaton;  
While side by side,  
O Marmaton,  
The shadows o'er thy prairies glide,  
Thy prairies wide,  
O Marmaton.  
For nations come and nations go,  
Whither and whence we cannot know.  
Great days, in stormy years though hid,  
Great years, dark centuries amid,  
Will ever and anon emerge,  
Like life-boats drifting through a surge  
Where billows sweep and mad winds urge.  
Of future heed,  
O Marmaton,  
Thou hast no need,  
O Marmaton.  
With quiet force,  
In quiet course,  
Still murmur on, O Marmaton.



## TARPEIA

UPON the massive walls  
The cloudless moonlight falls;  
It silver-plates the portico and fane;  
The tawny Tiber drifts  
By castellated cliffs,  
And bears its sluggish wavelets to the main.

Anon the silver fades  
From walls and colonnades;  
Clouds scarred with fire hurl down the vengeful rain;  
Impelled by gusty waifs,  
The tawny Tiber chafes,  
And hurls its turbid foamage to the main.

The Niobe of Night  
Has left her azure height;  
No more she stares disconsolately down;  
No more the angles sharp  
Of pinnacle and scarp,  
From filmy skies imperiously frown.

Amid the black and damp,  
The Sabines leave their camp,  
Before the gate their solid columns go;  
And there Tarpeia stands,  
With her unaided hands  
To open wide the portals to the foe.

Then spake the king to her:  
“What gift shall I confer,  
O maid of Rome, so daring and so fair?”  
The Roman maiden spake:  
“Those jewels I will take,  
That on their arms your Sabine soldiers wear.”

The eager columns march  
Beneath the rugged arch;  
They crush the maid with bracelets and with shields;  
A pledge is kept, and broke,  
And in the din and smoke  
The lurid fire the doom of war reveals.

Then comes the gloomy gray,  
The harbinger of day —  
Hurled from the rock Tarpeia finds a grave;  
And flaring like a flume,  
The Tiber through the gloom  
Transfers the tomb to ocean's cryptic wave.

. . . . .

Hope's signal torches shine  
Upon life's Esquiline,  
Its Quirinal, its rocky Palatine;  
From battlemented walls,  
Life's merry warder calls  
The hourly watches of the night's decline.

O Fate, behind a mask  
You promise all we ask —  
You promise wealth and happiness and fame;  
And then you keep, yet break.  
The promises you make —  
You take the substance and you leave the name.

Some ask of you a crown,  
A scepter, or renown;  
Some claim the jewels that your bright arm bears;  
But when you give, you fling,  
With every given thing,  
The weight of troubles and the crush of cares.

Perhaps 't were best to wait  
Behind the rugged gate,  
And ask no favors from your ready hand;  
To fight, and ask no charm  
From your bejeweled arm,  
And be not crushed with favors we demand.

## THE KANSAS OCTOBER

THE cheeriness and charm  
Of forest and of farm  
Are merging into colors sad and sober;  
The hectic frondage drapes  
The nut trees and the grapes —  
September yields to opulent October.

The cottonwoods that fringe  
The streamlets take the tinge;  
Through opal haze the sumac bush is burning,  
The lazy zephyrs lisp,  
Through cornfields dry and crisp,  
Their fond regrets for days no more returning.

The farm dog leaves the house  
To flush the timid grouse;  
The languid steers on blue-stem lawns are feeding;  
The evening twilight sees  
The rising Pleiades,  
While autumn suns are to the south receding.

To me there comes no thrill  
Of gloominess or chill,  
As leaflets fade from branches elm or oaken,  
As lifelessly they hang,  
To me there comes no pang;  
To me no grief the falling leaves betoken.

As summer's floral gems  
Bequeath us withered stems,  
And autumn-shattered relics dry and umber;  
So do these lives of ours,  
Like summer leaves and flowers,  
Flourish apace, and in their ripeness slumber

## THE AZTEC CITY

THERE is a clouded city, gone to rest  
Beyond the crest  
Where Cordilleras mar the mystic west.

There suns unheeded rise and re-arise;  
And in the skies  
The harvest moon unnoticed lives and dies.

And yet this clouded city has no night —  
Volcanic light  
Compels eternal noon-tide, redly bright.

A thousand wells, whence cooling waters came,  
No more the same,  
Now send aloft a thousand jets of flame.

This clouded city is enchanting fair,  
For rich and rare  
From sculptured frieze the gilded griffins stare.

With level look — with loving, hopeful face,  
Fixed upon space,  
Stand caryatides of unknown race,

And colonnades of dark green serpentine,  
    Of strange design,  
Carved on whose shafts queer alphabets combine.

And there are lofty temples, rich and great,  
    And at the gate,  
Carved in obsidian, the lions wait.

And from triumphant arches, looking down  
    Upon the town,  
In porphyry, sad, unknown statesmen frown.

And there are palace homes, and stately walls,  
    And open halls  
Where fountains are, with voiceless waterfalls.

The ruddy fire incessantly illumes  
    Temples and tombs,  
And in its blaze the stone-wrought cactus blooms.

From clouds congealed the mercury distills,  
    And forming rills,  
Adown the streets in double streamlet trills.

As rains from clouds, that summer skies eclipse,  
    From turret-tips  
And spire and porch the mobile metal drips.

No one that visited this fiery hive  
    Ever alive  
Came out but me — I, I alone, survive.

## FAILURE

**A**N old man sat upon the porch at evening;  
Down in the west the clouds were banked and  
sullen;

No one was near him, and in withered tone  
The old man spoke unto himself alone:

“ My life has been a vanity and failure;  
My wife, my health, my fortune taken from me;  
While strange disaster, striking far and wide,  
Has scattered all my children from my side.

“ And here I am alone, without a dollar,  
The hopes of youth all shattered and abandoned;  
My life a failure — failure from the first,  
A vanity, a failure, of the worst.”

Adown the west he looked with gloomy sorrow;  
And as he spoke the sky grew more tenebral.  
From time to time the cloud-banks lit with flame,  
And fitful zephyrs came, and died, and came.

Upon his staff his hands were clasped and trembling;  
Upon his hands his brow in sorrow rested;



And the sad west seemed constantly to take  
A tinge more dark and dismally opaque.

Then all at once there seemed to stand beside him  
A being draped as if with phosphorescence —  
A form of beauty, that might aptly seem  
To be the emanation of a dream.

So beautiful and good she seemed, a mortal  
Need but behold her once to idolize her;  
While character and sympathy and grace  
Shone like an inspiration in her face.

She placed her hand upon the old man's shoulder,  
And spoke in words of magic tone and feeling:  
“Why thus, my father, do you sadly brood  
O'er withered hopes with which all life is strewed?”

“Your life, though toilsome, has not been a failure.  
Old age may find you left without a dollar;  
But earth has blossomed where your hands have  
wrought,  
The world grown wiser where your lips have  
taught.

“Those coming first build up for those who follow,  
Shaping the future though they know not of it;  
As on the slow-wrought ledges coralline  
The continents of future times begin.

“ Though in old age without a friend or dollar,  
He who has spent his days in honest labor  
Can say with certainty, when they are done,  
His life has been a most successful one.

“ There is no place, except on earth, for dollars —  
Your scattered children will be reunited.”  
And then she stooped and kissed the old man's  
cheek,  
And said, “ My father ”; but he did not speak.

The vision vanished, but the old man moved not;  
The grief was over, and the failure ended;  
While on the lifeless face, serene and fixed,  
There seemed a smile as if of peace unmixed.

Down in the west the banks of cloud tenebral  
Lifted and scattered in the viewless ether:  
And in their stead, with mild and gentle light,  
Shone forth again the jewels of the night.

## THE GEESE AND THE CRANES

**I**T is sunrise. In the morn  
Stands a field of ripened corn;  
And the rich autumnal rays  
Of those sunny Kansas days  
Fill that field of ripened corn  
With an opalescent haze;  
Flocks of geese and flocks of cranes  
Pick the fallen, golden grains.

It is noon-time; and the rays  
Of the Indian summer blaze;  
Then the field of ripened corn,  
Much more shattered than at morn,  
Seems emerging from the haze.  
Fewer geese, but far more cranes,  
Pick the fallen, golden grains.

It is evening; and the haze  
Of the short autumnal days,  
Like a mantle, seems to rest  
On the dark and leaden west.

## Rhymes of Ironquill

Shattered is the field of maize.

Homeward fly the geese; the cranes

Linger, picking golden grains.

It is midnight. Rains and sleet

On the blackened landscape beat;

And there nothing now remains

Of that field of standing corn.

But through darkness, sleet, and rains

Comes the crying of the cranes,

As they search the field forlorn,

Fighting for the final grains.

Hours the grains, and life the field

Where the golden grains are had;

Daily habits, good and bad,

Represent the geese and cranes

Eating up the golden grains.

Few the habits that are best,

And they early go to rest;

But through sleet and midnight rains

Heard the cryings are of cranes

Fighting for the final grains.

## GLORY

A ROCKET scaled the terraces of night,  
And yet  
It failed to reach the parapet.

I told a noble-hearted friend of mine  
That he,  
Though great, far greater yet would be.

He rose as did Acestes' arrow rise;  
He burned,  
And burning, into ashes turned.

He rose, and rising blazed, and burned away,  
And yet  
He failed to reach the parapet.

## FRAUDS

AMBITIOUS, shrewd,  
Unprincipled, and ever fond of show,  
Hanno of Carthage, centuries ago,  
Determined to be great; he bought a brood  
Of fledgling parrots, taught them at his nod  
To scream in chorus: "Hanno is a god!"

When they were taught,  
He had a hireling place them on the street,  
As if for sale to those he chanced to meet:  
But yet by no one could the birds be bought.  
Then Hanno passed in pomp, and gave a nod,  
Out shrieked the parrots: "Hanno is a god!"

"Cunningly done."  
That night said Hanno, as he doffed his clothes  
Of silk embroidery, to seek repose:  
"Distinguished immortality is won;  
For heardst thou not that superstitious squad  
Catch up the sentence, 'Hanno is a god'?"

. . . . .

A galley slave,  
Condemned, went Hanno o'er the cloudy seas  
That hid the fabled Cassiterides;

Wealthy in grief, no home except the wave,  
Lashed to the oar, betimes urged by the rod,  
Not very much a man, much less a god.

It could not win.  
It never did. Although the world applauds,  
It turns at last and punishes its frauds.

Although it may not hasten to begin,  
True to itself, when once it has begun,  
It drives them to the galleys one by one.

### THREE STATES

OF all the States, but three will live in story:  
Old Massachusetts with her Plymouth Rock,  
And old Virginia with her noble stock,  
And sunny Kansas with her woes and glory;  
These three will live in song and oratory,  
While all the others, with their idle claims,  
Will only be remembered as mere names.



## THE PROTEST

*[Written while the Government was removing buried soldiers from the battle-fields of secession and organizing national cemeteries.]*

LET them rest, let them rest where they fell.  
Every battle-field is sacred;  
If you let them stay to guard it,  
They will veil those spots with valor  
Like a spell.  
All the soil will seem implanted  
With the germs of vital freedom;  
Where they spent their lives so grandly  
Let them dwell;  
Do not rank them up in fields,  
Under pallid marble shields;  
Let them rest and be cherished  
Where they fell.

Let them rest, let them rest where they fell:  
On the prairie, in the forest,  
Under cypress, under laurel,

## Rhymes of Ironquill

On the mountain, by the bayou,  
In the dell.  
Let the glories of the battle  
Shroud the heroes who are buried,  
Resting where they fought so bravely,  
Long, and well.  
Do not rank them up in fields.  
Under pallid marble shields;  
Let them rest. let them rest  
Where they fell.

## ANCHORS

THE anchors are strong that hold the ships;  
The wire is strong that bridges the fall;  
But all of their strength must suffer eclipse  
Compared with the words of a woman's lips,  
For she binds the man that has made them all.

## SHADOW

THE day has been vague, and the sky has been  
bleak,

Affairs have gone backward the whole day long;  
My friends as I meet them will scarcely speak,  
And vainly the things I have lost I seek.

I am weary and sad — and the world is wrong.

The morrow has come, and the sky has grown clear,

The world appears righted, and rings with song;  
My friends as I meet them have words of cheer,  
The things that I thought I had lost reappear,  
And the work pushes forward the whole day long.

As the strings of a harp, standing side by side,

Are the days of sadness and days of song;  
The sunshine and shadow are ever allied,  
But the shadows will fade, and the sunshine bide,  
Though to-day may be dim, and the world go  
wrong.

## THE TOBACCO STEMMERS

STEMMING tobacco in a reeking basement,  
At work, with little left of hopes or joys,  
Were silent groups of many shaded faces,  
Their blood the sewage of barbaric races,  
Women and girls, old men and sober boys.

In the vast basement the reluctant ceilings  
Were propped by pillars weary with delay;  
The mid-day light shrank from the poisoned vapors,  
While feeble jets lit, as with ghostly tapers,  
The woeful scenes where life was worked away.

Looking around, my angry heart protested.

“How,” I inquired, “are such conditions made?  
What human laws betray such soulless phases?  
Are these the victims of crime’s stern ukases?”

The foreman said: “No; of the laws of trade.”

Then of myself my soul did ask the question:

Would I work here and earn my daily bread?  
Would I toil here to make an “honest living”;  
And, at the end of lock-stepped hours, forgiving,  
Go sleepfully and dreamlessly to bed?

I'm too discordant. I would hurl this handful  
Of clay I've borrowed at the Great White Throne.  
Shrieking at fate I'd die, like Caesar, standing,  
With torch and steel I'd take my chances, landing  
Within the vortex of the great unknown.

Noting my thoughts, the foreman gave a signal;  
A silence fell at once on every tongue!  
Then suddenly a low and rhythmic murmur  
Broke forth into a cadence strong and firmer,  
And in it joined the aged and the young.

The rats peered from their holes. The oaken pillars,  
Smoky and stained, began to vibrate white;  
And still the song rose up in wild derision  
Of present things, and claimed with strange de-  
cision,  
There is a land of restful peace and right.

The song transformed the walls to pallid onyx,  
The rafters changed to maze of antique oak,  
The sodden floor grew firm and tessellated,  
And in the stead of vapor, poison-freighted,  
An incense rose with faint and filmy smoke.

My soul retains that song's redundant sorrow;  
There may be justice somewhere — who can tell?  
Perhaps the captor he, who wears the fetter,

Perhaps the torch and steel were not the better,  
To be the wronged, perhaps, were just as well.

Perhaps these lives of ours, when sere and withered,  
May be picked over in some juster land,  
Torn from the earthly stem and there inspected —  
By the aroma of good deeds selected —  
Perhaps it's so. We do not understand.

Work on, sing on, O toilers. May the future  
Restore the world to him who works and sings.  
May justice come inflexibly decreeing  
The ample right of every human being  
To happiness and hope in present things.

## CHAOS

I 'VE seen an ice-clad river leave its banks,  
And tear through hills of time-enduring rock;  
I've seen grand squadrons charging ranks on ranks  
And felt the planet tremble with the shock.

I've seen red navies with their ribs of oak  
Lashed into splinters by the frantic main;  
I've watched proud cities wander off in smoke;  
I've seen autumnal ruin sweep the plain.

I've stood at midnight on the rocky height  
That bars the purple meadows of the west;  
I've seen the silent empress of the night  
Sail slowly onward, splendoring crest on crest

But never have I seen, in earth or air,  
A method or a principle. I scan  
An unplanned chaos, shaping here and there  
The greatness and the littleness of man.



## THE BIRD SONG

I N the night air I heard the woodland ringing,  
I heard it ring with wild and thrilling song;  
Hidden the bird whose strange inspiring singing  
Seems yet to float in liquid waves along,—

Seems yet to float with many a quirk and quaver,  
With quirks and quavers and exultant notes,  
As through the air, with sympathetic waver.  
Down through the songs the falling starlight floats.

Speaking, I said: “O bird with songs sonorous,  
O bird with songs of such sonorous glee,  
Sing me a song of joy, and in the chorus,  
In the same chorus I will join with thee.

“The songs that others sing seem but to sadden,—  
Seem but to sadden,—those which I have heard,—  
Sing me a song whose gleesome notes will gladden—  
Sing me a song of joy.” Then sang the bird:

“There is a land where blossoming exotic,  
The amaranths with fadeless colors glow;

Where notes of birds with melodies chaotic  
In tangled songs forever come and go.

“There skies serene and bland will bend above us,  
And from them blessings like the rain will fall;  
There those fond friends that we have loved shall  
love us,  
In that bright land those friends shall love us all.”

The singer ceased, the rhapsody sonorous  
No more through starlit woodland sped along;  
And as it ceased, my heart refused the chorus,  
Refused to join the chorus of the song.

“Ah, no” — I said, “thou bird in branches hidden,  
Hope’s garlands bright grief’s fingers slowly twine;  
Grief slowly twines from blooms that spring un-  
bidden —  
That spring unbidden as our lives decline.

“Grief present now proves naught of the eternal;  
Grief proves no future with good blessings rife —  
With blessings rife and futures blandly vernal;  
Facts show no logic in a future life.”

And then I said: “False is thy song sonorous —  
Thy song that floats from starlit woodland dim;

When we are gone and flowers are blooming o'er  
us —

When man has gone, there ends the all with him."

Still sang the bird: "There skies shall bend above us,  
And sprinkle blessings like the rains that fall;  
And those we loved — who loved us not — shall love  
us,

In that bright land shall love us most of all."

Then came a song-burst of bewildering splendor,  
That rolled in waves through forest corridors;  
Up soared the bird, fain did my hopes attend her,  
And hopes and songs were lost amid the stars.

Now all day long, upon my mind intruding,  
There comes the echo of that last night's song;  
Grief claims the wreck on which my mind is brooding,  
Hope claims the facts which logic claimed so long.

Who cares, O bird, for skies that bend above us?  
Who cares if blessings like the rain shall fall,  
If only those who loved us not shall love us —  
In that bright future love us most of all?

Let logic marshal ranks of facts well stated,  
It leads them on in vain though brave attacks;  
For looking down from bastions crenelated,  
Hope smiles derision at assaulting facts.

## THE PYTHIAN

I AM the sibyl of the right divine,  
Who spoke the sayings of the Delphic shrine;  
In after years this apothegm recall:  
“Marry the man who loves thee most of all”;  
And who he is thou needest never guess —  
Who chatters more is he who loves the less.

## QUIVERA — KANSAS

1541-1891

IN that half-forgotten era,  
With the avarice of old,  
Seeking cities he was told  
Had been paved with yellow gold.  
In the kingdom of Quivera—

Came the restless Coronado  
To the open Kansas plain,  
With his knights from sunny Spain;  
In an effort that, though vain,  
Thrilled with boldness and bravado.

League by league, in aimless marching,  
Knowing scarcely where or why,  
Crossed they uplands drear and dry,  
That an unprotected sky  
Had for centuries been parching.

But their expectations, eager,  
Found, instead of fruitful lands,

## Rhymes of Ironquill

Shallow streams and shifting sands,  
Where the buffalo in bands  
Roamed o'er deserts dry and meager.

'Back to scenes more trite, yet tragic,  
Marched the knights with armor'd steeds;  
Not for them the quiet deeds;  
Not for them to sow the seeds  
From which empires grow like magic.

Never land so hunger-stricken  
Could a Latin race re-mold;  
They could conquer heat or cold —  
Die for glory or for gold —  
But not make a desert quicken.

Thus Quivera was forsaken;  
And the world forgot the place  
Through the lapse of time and space.  
Then the blue-eyed Saxon race  
Came and bade the desert waken.

And it bade the climate vary;  
And awaiting no reply  
From the elements on high,  
It with plows besieged the sky —  
Vexed the heavens with the prairie.

Then the vitreous sky relented,  
 And the unacquainted rain  
 Fell upon the thirsty plain,  
 Whence had gone the knights of Spain,  
 Disappointed, discontented.

Sturdy are the Saxon faces,  
 As they move along in line;  
 Bright the rolling-cutters shine,  
 Charging up the State's incline,  
 As an army storms a glaxis.

Into loam the sand is melted,  
 And the blue-grass takes the loam,  
 Round about the prairie home;  
 And the locomotives roam  
 Over landscapes iron-belted.

Cities grow where stunted birches  
 Hugged the shallow water-line;  
 And the deepening rivers twine  
 Past the factory and mine,  
 Orchard slopes and schools and churches.

Deeper grows the soil and truer,  
 More and more the prairie teems  
 With a fruitage as of dreams:  
 Clearer, deeper, flow the streams,  
 Blander grows the sky and bluer.

We have made the State of Kansas,  
And to-day she stands complete—  
First in freedom, first in wheat;  
And her future years will meet  
Ripened hopes and richer stanzas.

## LONGFELLOW

WHEN there shall come the distant day  
That English shall no more be spoken  
When arch and column shall be broken,  
And all the Now has passed away,  
And all is gone of yours and mine,  
The eager schoolboy, fresh and ruddy,  
Will bear among his books of study  
The verses of Evangeline.



## VICTORIA: A KANSAS GREETING

(Jubilee, June 22, 1897)

LIVE on, O Queen; beyond the western seas  
A mighty kindred nation not thine own  
Views with delight the halo 'round thy throne.

Live on, live ever on; the centuries  
Like ships will come across a shoreless main,  
Laden with benedictions on thy reign.

## DEWEY

O DEWEY was the morning  
Upon the first of May,  
And Dewey was the Admiral  
Down in Manila Bay;  
And Dewey were the Regent's eyes,  
“ Them ” orbs of royal blue!  
And Dewey feel discouraged?  
I Dew not think we Dew.

Published *Topeka Daily Capital*, morning of May 3, 1898.

## A HOLY WAR

[*The Russo-Turkish campaign*]

ON the south is seen an empire —  
Mosque and minaret, in frenzy,  
To the ruler of the “faithful”  
Send their influence and riches;  
And the holy shrine of Mecca  
Pours out gold and absolution,  
While it speeds the Prophet’s children  
To the hospitals and ditches.

On the north a Christian empire  
In the name of Christ is acting.  
Mobs, to gain a benediction,  
Rally round a bishop’s miter;  
And they use the church’s treasure,  
In the holy name of Jesus,  
While they march away His children  
To the vulture and the niter.

We may hope to see an era  
That has fewer orphan children —

## Rhymes of Ironquill

That objects to shrieking bugle  
And the sight of blazing village;  
When religion, in the future,  
Shall refuse to be the agent  
By which merciless amb'ion  
Further schemes of public pillage.

## THE CRUSADES

THE one I love so much sits by my side —  
Sits by my side and listens as I read;  
We little care how o'er the prairies wide  
The wintry, zero-loving tempests glide,  
As one by one the fire-lit hours recede.  
In one of mine I hold her little hands  
And read to her of wars in distant lands.

I read to her of times long passed away,  
That shine like jewels in the wild Crusades;  
That light up cities crumbling in decay;  
That out of darkness bring the glare of day —  
A glare that soon to greater darkness fades.  
I read to her of princes and of seers,  
Of cruelties, of sufferings, of tears.

I read to her of hermits and of kings,  
Of Conrad, Tancred, Baldwin and Behmond;  
I read to her of bravery that springs  
From wild fanaticism, whose strong wings  
Take, in their sweep, this world and the beyond.  
And, as I read, the gusty tempests rage,  
As if in sympathy with every page.

## NETSIE

HAPPINESS or heartache ?  
Either it may be,  
Blue-eyed little daughter  
Sitting on my knee.  
Happiness or heartache,  
Either it may be.

Heartache or heartbreak  
If it sadly be,  
Blue-eyed little daughter  
Sitting on my knee,  
Though I may be buried  
I will grieve with thee.

When the ache is ended,  
We can go and see  
Our old home in Lyra,  
Where the rainbows be;  
You will have a world of fun  
When you go with me.

## THE VIOLET STAR

“ I HAVE always lived, and I always must,”  
The sergeant said when the fever came;  
From his burning brow we washed the dust,  
And we held his hand, and we spoke his name.

“ Millions of ages have come and gone,”  
The sergeant said as we held his hand —  
“ They have passed like the mist of the early dawn  
Since I left my home in that far-off land.”

We bade him hush, but he gave no heed —  
“ Millions of orbits I crossed from far,  
Drifted as drifts the cottonwood seed;  
I came,” said he, “ from the Violet Star.

“ Drifting in cycles from place to place —  
I’m tired,” said he, “ and I’m going home  
To the Violet Star, in the realms of space  
Where I loved to live, and I will not roam.

“ For I’ve always lived, and I always must,  
And the soul in roaming may roam too far;

I have reached the verge that I dare not trust,  
And I'm going back to the Violet Star."

The sergeant was still, and we fanned his cheek;  
There came no word from that soul so tired;  
And the bugle rang from the distant peak,  
As the morning dawned and the pickets fired.

The sergeant was buried as soldiers are;  
And we thought all day, as we marched through  
the dust:

"His spirit has gone to the Violet Star —  
He always has lived, and he always must."



## TO THE CARNIVAL QUEEN

NOT all the tints of the summer skies,  
Nor the blushes of alien flowers,  
Nor the sheen on the lakes of Paradise,  
Where the evening goes, and the sunset lies,  
Can equal this queen of ours.

Not all of the lovers that yet have been  
In the ages so far apart,  
Are as loyal as we, who here begin  
In our welcome way, to enfold her in  
The corolla of our heart.

And ever and ever a fairy prize,  
In a prison that has no bars,  
We will hold her while eternity dies  
Or as long as the glistening centuries  
Shall drip from the silent stars.

## CHILDHOOD

It passed in beauty,  
Like the waves that reach  
Their jeweled fingers  
Up the sanded beach.

It passed in beauty,  
Like the flowers that spring  
Behind the footsteps  
Of the winter king.

It passed in beauty  
Like the clouds on high,  
That drape the ceilings  
Of the summer sky.

## THE RHYMES OF IRONQUILL

I 'VE allus held — till jest of late — that Poetry and me  
Got on best, not to 'sociate — that is, most poetry;  
But t'other day my Son-in-law, who'd ben in town to mill,  
Fetched home a present, like, fer Ma: — The Rhymes of Ironquill.

He used to teach; and course his views ranks over common sense;  
That's biased me till I refuse 'most all he rickcommends;  
But Ma she read and read along, and cried, like women will,  
About “ The Washerwoman's Song ” in Rhymes of Ironquill.

And then she made me read the thing, and found my specs and all;  
And I jest leant back there, I jing! my cheer against the wall,  
And read and read, and read and read, all to myse'f, until  
I lit the lamp and went to bed with Rhymes of Ironquill!

I propped myse'f up there, and — Durn! — I never shet an eye  
Till daylight! — hogged the whole concern, tee-total, mighty nigh! —  
I'd sigh sometimes, and cry sometimes, er laugh jest fit to kill —  
Clean captured, like, with them-air Rhymes of that-air Ironquill!

Read that-un 'bout old “ Marmaton ” 'at hain't ben ever sized  
In song before — and yit 's rolled on jest same as 'postrophized! —  
Putt m in mind of our old crick at Freeport; and the mill;  
And Hinchman's Ford — till jest home-sick! them Rhymes of Iron-  
quill!

## Rhymes of Ironquill

Read that-un too — 'bout game o' whist — and likenin' Life to fun  
Like that — and playin' out yer fist, however cards is run:  
And them "Tobacker-Stemmers' Song" they sung with sich a will,  
Down 'mongst the misery and wrong, O Rhymes of Ironquill!

And old "John Brown," who broke the sod of Freedom's fallow field  
And sowed his heart there, thankin' God pore slaves 'ud git the  
yield! —

Rained his last tears for them, and us, to irrigate and till  
A crop of songs as glorious as Rhymes of Ironquill!

And, sergeant, died there in the War, 'at talked, out of his head —  
He went "back to the Violet Star," I'll bet! — jest like he said! —  
Yer wars kin riddle bone and flesh, and blow out brains, and spill  
Life-blood — but SOMEFIN' lives on, fresh as Rhymes of Ironquill!

JAMES WHITCOMB RILEY.

## EL MORAN

CROSSING the orbit of Aldebaran,  
And sixteen orbits to Taurus Rho,  
As dashes a boat through a chain of whirlpools  
Into a slumbering lake below;

Thence, through a chaos of constellations,  
I came at last to an open place,  
And saw in the distance the waves of ether  
Breaking in foam on the cliffs of space.

Vacantly gazing, I felt a presence —  
A viewless presence, without a word.  
A soul was beside me; I felt a question;  
Nevertheless not a sound I heard.

“Whence are you coming, and whither going,  
And who,” I thought, “can you really be?”  
An interval passed, as of hesitation;  
This was the answer it thought at me:

“Losing my life in a mine explosion  
A week ago, in the planet Mars,

I thought I would look up a new location;  
Are you acquainted among the stars?"

"No," I replied; "I was killed by lightning  
On yester morn, in Hindostan;  
I visit our old and ancestral homestead,  
Back in the nebula El Moran."

Both of us talked of the past and present;  
We watched the asteroids weaving lace,  
And berylline billows of surging ether  
Pounding the limitless cliffs of space.

## IOLINE

*(The poet's muse—an imitation.)*

ONE black evening in October  
All the world seemed sad and sober,  
And a doom

Dark and dismal  
Shrouded all life's colors prismatic,  
And before me yawned abysmal  
Gulfs of gloom.

Said I bitterly: I only  
Of the world am sad and lonely,  
I alone

Drain the chalice;  
All the angels bear me malice,  
There is love in cot and palace —  
None my own.

That dark night I turned a traitor  
To myself and my Creator,  
And I said:

Be it ended,

## Rhymes of Ironquill

Hope may make existence splendid,  
But without it, unattended —  
Better dead.

Then a something seemed to chide me  
From the darkness there beside me,  
In a tone  
Uttered clearly:  
“ You have spoken insincerely:  
There are those who love you dearly,  
Though unknown.”

Who are you, and whence your visit ?  
Turning gruffly, said I: Is it  
The unseen  
To awaken ?  
Said the voice: “ You ’re mistaken;  
It is Ioline — forsaken  
Ioline.”

When I heard the sentence uttered,  
In bewilderment I stuttered,  
A remark  
Somewhat grimly,  
As a form, freshly, primly,  
Grew and ripened in the dimly  
Lighted dark.



Yes, the artless little comer,  
Like a musk rose in the summer  
    Seemed to bloom;  
                                And her forehead  
Shook back tresses that seemed borrowed  
From the winter night, or quarried  
    Out of gloom.

With a smile so arch and airy,  
To my side came the fairy,  
    Like a queen  
                                Blithe and bloomy.  
“Let us stroll,” said she to me;  
Yes, said I, for I’m gloomy,  
    Ioline.

Ah! she told me gorgeous stories  
Of her home, and the glories  
    Of the zone  
                                Where it stretches.  
And she hummed me little sketches  
Of immortal music, such as  
    Sweeps the Throne.

All my gloominess was banished;  
Then the moon rose, and she vanished —  
    Yes, my queen  
                                Had departed,

## Rhymes of Ironquill

But she kissed me ere she started;  
And she left me sunny hearted  
And serene.

To that land of sun and blossom  
She has built a bridge of gossamer  
And gold;

And I've traveled  
It in dreaming, and unraveled  
Dismal doubts, whereon I caviled  
Days of old.

Now no evening of October  
Finds me ever sad or sober;  
All the world  
Seems a palace;  
There are none who bear me malice,  
And afar away the chalice  
I have hurled.

JULY, 1875.

## THE OLD PIONEER

WHERE are they gone? Where are they —  
The faces of my childhood?  
I've sought them by the mountains,  
By the rivers, by the canyons;  
I have called upon the prairie,  
I have called upon the wildwood:  
“Oh, give me back! Oh, give me back  
The faces of my childhood—  
The boys and girls,  
My playmates, my companions!”

The days of early childhood  
Have a strange, attractive glimmer,  
A lustrous, misty fadelessness,  
Half seen and yet half hidden,  
As of isles in distant oceans,  
Where the shattered moonbeams shimmer,  
Concealing half, disclosing half.  
With rapturing, fracturing glimmer,  
The realms to which  
Our visits are forbidden.

Now vainly am I calling  
On the mountains and the canyons;  
And vainly from the forest,  
From the river or the wildwood,  
Do I ask the restoration  
Of my playmates, my companions.  
No voice returns from mountain-sides  
From forest or from canyons;  
Forever gone,—  
The faces of my childhood.

JOHN BROWN

STATES are not great  
Except as men may make them;  
Men are not great except they do and dare.  
But States, like men,  
Have destinies that take them —  
That bear them on, not knowing why or where.

The WHY repels  
The philosophic searcher —  
The WHY and WHERE all questionings defy,  
Until we find,  
Far back in youthful nurture,  
Prophetic facts that constitute the WHY.

All merit comes  
From braving the unequal;  
All glory comes from daring to begin.  
Fame loves the State  
That, reckless of the sequel,  
Fights long and well, whether it lose or win.

Than in our State  
No illustration apter  
Is seen or found of faith and hope and will.  
Take up her story:  
Every leaf and chapter  
Contains a record that conveys a thrill.

And there is one  
Whose faith, whose fight, whose failing,  
Fame shall placard upon the walls of time.  
He dared begin —  
Despite the unavailing,  
He dared begin, when failure was a crime.

When over Africa  
Some future cycle  
Shall sweep the lake-gemmed uplands with its surge;  
When, as with trumpet  
Of Archangel Michael,  
Culture shall bid a colored race emerge;

When busy cities  
There, in constellations,  
Shall gleam with spires and palaces and domes,  
With marts wherein  
Is heard the noise of nations;  
With summer groves surrounding stately homes —

There, future orators  
To cultured freemen  
Shall tell of valor, and recount with praise  
Stories of Kansas,  
And of Lacedæmon —  
Cradles of freedom, then of ancient days.

From boulevards  
O'erlooking both Nyanzas,  
The statured bronze shall glitter in the sun,  
With rugged lettering:

“JOHN BROWN OF KANSAS:  
HE DARED BEGIN;  
HE LOST,  
BUT, LOSING, WON.”

## LIFE'S MOONRISE

NO sunrise — no noon — no sunset;  
On the prairie, like a pall,  
All day hangs the storm, and from it  
Unhappiness seems to fall.

At evening the sky grows cloudless,  
And the moon shines round and clear;  
While pure as the smiles of angels  
The glittering stars appear.

The red deer and the primrose  
And the prairie-larks are gay,  
Till night, with its moonlit beauty,  
Is merged in the broad, bright day.

. . . . .

Some lives have a cloudy sunrise,  
With a noon-tide clear and bright;  
And some have a day of sunshine,  
With rainy and cheerless night.

My life had been sad and rainy  
Through its long and somber day;



At last came the placid moonrise  
And scattered the clouds away.

I'm now in life's moonrise living;  
And although the sun has set,  
There come to me no suggestions  
Of sorrow or vain regret.

I'm seeing new worlds and planets  
In the open evening sky;  
My soul feels a wild, new daring  
As whisper the night-winds by.

I'm giving no thought to troubles,  
Nor the past that flew away;  
But hoping the moonlit present  
May merge in the broad, bright day.

## VICTOR

HE was a hero, fighting all alone;  
A lonesome warrior — never one more brave,  
Discreet, considerate, and grave.  
He fought some noble battles: but he gave  
No voice to fame, and passed away unknown.

So grandly to occasions did he rise,  
So splendid were the victories he planned,  
That all the world had asked him to command  
Could it his native valor understand:  
He fought himself, and, winning, gained the prize.

“FEAR YE HIM”

I FEAR Him not, nor yet do I defy.  
Much could He harm me, cared He but to try.

Much could He frighten me, much do me ill,  
Much terrify me, but — He never will.

The soul of justice must itself be just;  
Who trembles most betrays the most distrust.

So, plunging in life's current deep and broad  
I take my chances, *ignorant* — unawed.

## TO-DAY

WORK on, work on —  
Work wears the world away;  
Hope when to-morrow comes,  
But work to-day.

Work on, work on —  
Work brings its own relief;  
He who most idle is  
Has most of grief.

## DECORATION DAY

*[Recited at Arlington]*

IT is needless I should tell you  
Of the history of Sumter,  
How the chorus of the canon shook its walls;  
How the scattered navies gathered,  
How the iron-ranked battalions  
Rose responsive to the country's urgent calls.

It is needless that I tell you,  
For the time is still too recent,  
How was heard the first vindictive cannon's peal;  
How two brothers stopped debating  
On a sad, unsettled question,  
And referred it to the arbitrating steel.

It is needless that I tell you  
Of the somber days that followed —  
Stormy days that in such slow succession ran;  
Of Antietam, Chickamauga,  
Gettysburg, and Murfreesboro',  
Or the rocky, cannon-shaken Rapidan.

It was not a war of conquest:  
It was fought to save the Union,  
It was waged for an idea of the right;  
And the graves so widely scattered  
Show how fruitful an idea  
In peace, or war, may be in moral might.

Brief indeed the war had lasted  
Had it raged in hope of plunder;  
Briefer still, had glory been its only aim.  
But its long and sad duration  
And the graves it has bequeathed us,  
Other motives, other principles proclaim.

Need I mention this idea,  
The invincible idea,  
That so seemed to hold and save the Nation's life  
That, resistless and unblenching,  
Undisheartened by disaster,  
Seemed the soul and inspiration of the strife?

This idea was of freedom —  
Was that men should all stand equal,  
That the world was interested in the fight;  
That the present and the future  
Were electors who had chosen  
Us to argue and decide the case aright.

And the theories of freedom  
 Those now silent bugles uttered  
 Will reverberate with ever-growing tones;  
 They can never be forgotten,  
 But will work among the nations  
 Till they sweep the world of shackles and of thrones.

It is meet that we do honor  
 To the comrades who have fallen —  
 Meet that we the sadly woven garlands twine.  
 Where they buried lie is sacred,  
 Whether 'neath the Northern marble  
 Or beneath the Southern cypress-tree or pine.

Nations are the same as children —  
 Always living in the future,  
 Living in their aspirations and their hopes;  
 Picturing some future greatness,  
 Reaching forth for future prizes,  
 With a wish for higher aims and grander scopes.

It is better for the people  
 That they reach for an ideal,  
 That they give their future nations better lives;  
 Though the standard be unreal,  
 Though the hope meets no fulfillment,  
 Though the fact in empty dreams alone survives.

If the people rest contented  
With the good they have accomplished,  
Then they retrograde and slowly sink away.  
Give a nation an ideal,  
Some grand, noble, central project;  
It, like adamant, refuses to decay.

'T is the duty of the poet,  
'T is the duty of the statesman,  
To inspire a nation's life with nobler aims;  
And dishonor will o'ershadow  
Him who dares not, or who falsely  
His immortal-fruited mission misproclaims.



## THE DEFAULTER

### CHICAGO

“ I’LL cross the sea,” he said, “and the future will  
be sunny,  
The storms no more will rave;  
I’ll cross the sea,” he said, “and with other people’s  
money  
Be free and gay beyond the ocean wave.”

### PARIS

“ I’ll move again,” he said, “to Naples, Rome, or  
Venice.  
I will no more divide  
With arrogant detectives ; I’ll live no more in  
menace:  
The Apennines shall separate us wide.”

### ROME

“ I’ll cross the sea,” he said, in a tone of melan-  
choly;  
“ I can divide no more.  
I’ve failed of being happy—have failed of being jolly,  
And justice waits me on a distant shore.

## CHICAGO

“I’m here,” he said, “for justice. Let the sentence  
be impartial;  
By it I will abide.  
For my wife is broken-hearted, and I can no longer  
marshal  
Any of my scattered children to my side.”

## JOLIET

“No one,” he said, “in chasing after Happiness has  
found her:  
But if she comes at all,  
She comes uncalled, unbidden, with a sunny halo  
round her—  
Visits alike the hovel and the hall.”

## THE CHILD OF FATE

I AM the child of fate.  
What need it matter me  
Where I shall buried be!  
Death cometh soon or late,  
Whether on land or sea;  
What may it matter me!

Of what hope hangs upon  
We can no insight get;  
Blindly fate leads us on,  
Storming life's parapet.  
That which our course impels  
Naught of the future tells.

Whether upon the land,  
Whether upon the strand,  
What may it matter me  
Where I shall buried be!  
Death cometh soon or late,  
All are the sport of fate.

## Rhymes of Ironquill

What should it matter me,  
Falling as others fell,  
Shattered by shot or shell;  
Either on land or sea,  
Wrecked on the foaming bar,  
Crushed in the shattered car.

Whether by Arctic cliffs,  
Where the ice-current drifts,  
Where the bleak night-wind sobs,  
Where the black ice-tide throbs;  
What though my bark may be  
Sunk in some sullen sea!

Each has his work and way,  
Each has his part and play,  
Each has his task to do  
Both of the good and true.  
Though thou art grave or gay,  
Be thou yet brave and true.

Work for the right and just,  
With an intrepid trust;  
Then it need matter thee  
Naught, if thou buried be  
Either on land or strand,  
Either 'neath soil or sea.

LEGOUSIN AI

[*From the Greek of Anacreon*]

THE women say:  
    “Anacreon, you are old;  
    For, taking up a mirror, you behold  
The locks of rosy youth how scattered they.”

But as a care  
    It is not unto me  
    How old am I, how few my locks may be,  
So long as youth's young spirit still is there.

## THE KANSAS DUG-OUT

PEERING from a Kansas hillside, far away,  
Is a cabin made of sod, and built to stay;  
Through the window-like embrasure  
Pours the mingled gold and azure  
Of the morning of a gorgeous Kansas day.

Round the cabin, clumps of roses here and there  
With a wild and welcome fragrance fill the air;  
And the love of heaven settles  
On their open pink-lined petals,  
As the angels come and put them in their hair.

Blue-eyed children round the cabin chase the day;  
They are learning life's best lesson — how to stay,  
To be tireless and resistful;  
And the antelope look wistful,  
And they want to join the children in their play.

Fortune-wrecked, the parents sought the open  
West,  
Leaving happy homes and friends they loved the  
best;

Homes in cities bright and busy  
That responded to the dizzy,  
To the whirling and tumultuous unrest.

Oft it happens unto families and men  
That they need must touch their mother earth  
again;  
Rising, rugged and reliant,  
Like Antæus, the old giant,  
Then they dare and do great things—and not till  
then.

As around his neck the arms of children twine,  
Says the father: "Courage, children, never pine;  
Though the skies around you blacken,  
Do not yield—the gales will slacken,  
Faith and fortitude will win, O children mine."

Happy prairie children! Time with rapid wings  
Golden trophies to the earnest worker brings.

As the Trojan said: "*Durate*  
*Vosmet rebus et servate*"\*—

"Hold yourselves in hand for higher, nobler  
things."

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\* Æneid, I, 207.

## WHITHER

BESIDE a pool where curved a Kansas brook,  
A youthful fisherman stood, brown and tan;  
A lump of lead held down a baited hook,  
And as I watched the eager little man,  
From thought to thought some strange sugges-  
tions ran.

Perhaps the soul, as if imprisoned here,  
Is weighted down with lump of heavy clay,  
Beneath the ocean of the atmosphere;  
Fain would it rise, and yet perforce must stay  
Deep in the night, yet which we think the day.

At certain times a power seems to draw,  
And then we feel as if we rose, and light  
Appears to us; and then some unknown law  
Is felt to pull us backward in our flight,  
And hold us to the bottom of the night.



## THE PRAIRIE STORM

WITH the daylight came the storm;  
And the clouds, like ragged veils,  
Trailed the prairie until noontide,

Borne by vacillating gales;  
And the red elms by the streamlets  
Dripped upon the wild-plum thickets,  
And the thickets, on the crickets  
And the quails.

Wet and sodden  
Lay the prairie grass untrodden.

Through the dismal afternoon  
Held the banks of cloud aloof,  
As the smoke in frontier cabins  
Hugs the rafters in the roof.  
Broke the clouds and ceased the dripping,  
And the red elms by the streamlets  
Caught the fading evening beamlets  
That, in proof,

Gave the token  
That the summer storm was broken.

With a nimbus like a saint  
    Rose the white moon in the east;  
And the grass all rose together  
    As the guests do at a feast;  
And the prairie lark kept singing  
All the night long, and the stirring  
And the whizzing and the whirring  
    Still increased;  
                                    Till all sorrow  
Yielded to the brilliant morrow.

## THE REAL

They say  
A certain flower that blooms forever  
In sunnier skies  
Is called the amaranth. They say it never  
Withers away or dies,—  
I never saw one.

They say  
A bird of foreign lands,—the condor,—  
Never alights,  
But through the air unceasingly will wander,  
In long, aërial flights,—  
I never saw one.

They say  
That in Egyptian deserts, massive,  
Half buried in the sands,  
Swept by the hot sirocco, grand, impassive,  
The statue of colossal Memnon stands,—  
I never saw it.

They say

A land faultless, far off, and fairy,

A summer land, with woods and glens and  
glades,

Is seen where palms rise feathery and airy,

And from whose lawns the sunlight never  
fades,—

I never saw it.

They say

The stars make melody sonorous

While whirling on their poles;

They say through space an interstellar chorus

Magnificently rolls,—

I never heard it.

Now what

Care I for amaranth or condor,

Colossal Memnon, or the fairy land,

Or for the songs of planets as they wander

Through arcs superlatively grand?—

They are not real.

Hope's idle

Dreams the Real vainly follows,

Facts stay as fadeless as the Parthenon;

While fancies, like the smoky-tinted swallows,

Flit gaily mid its arches and are gone.

## THRENE

I STOOD on the oxygen cliffs of the nebula El Tri-  
une,

I saw in the distance below the triangular planet of  
Threne,

The triclinic planet of Threne,

The beautiful planet of Threne.

It sang in a happy contralto a sort of a polka tune,

And left in its three-cornered orbit a tracing of yel-  
low sheen.

O marvelous planet of Threne, as you swing in your  
triple arc,

And whirl, and in whirling repeat at each node that  
contralto song,

That happy contralto song,

That strange and majestic song,

It makes me regret to be living far off in the distant  
dark,

Where the dismal, diminutive earth is tardily creep-  
ing along.

## THALATTA

### I

THE gale blew from France, and a wasted moon  
Arose on the rim of a friendless sky.  
I stood by the mast while the midnight waves  
Invaded the deck with an angry cry.

In tempest and swell as the steamer rolled,  
It tunneled its way through the foam and blast;  
Like ravenous wolves were the hollow waves  
That hungered for me as they hurried past.

There has come a new dream to me,  
It's a dream — it's a dream of the sea —  
A dream of the midnight sea.

### II

O horrible billows — O horrible night!  
The stoker, at home in the hell below,  
Was shoveling coal like a demon, stripped,  
While furnaces roared with a fervent glow.

When midnight is come, and my prairie home  
Is lit by the moon's unassuming glance,  
When ravenous waves and unsteady deck  
Are set in the past, with the gales of France,

Every once in a while to me  
Comes a dream, a strange dream of the sea —  
A dream of the midnight sea.

## III

I think that I may in a thousand years  
Remember the earth in its giddy course  
Still tunneling on through the cosmic waves,  
And breasting the storms of electric force.

And then I may think: O the dreadful time  
I rode on the earth through the stellar sea;  
O horrible night when the gales of fate  
And billows of force were a-whelming me!

Perhaps there may come to me  
Strange dreams of the stellar sea —  
Of the interstellar sea.

## THE TELEGRAPH WIRE

WEST from the boiling Missouri, turbid with pulverized granite,  
West o'er the orchards and farms asleep in the hammock of autumn,  
West o'er the upland uprising, russet with wheat-land close shaven,  
West o'er the yellowish shales and scattering prairie-dog cities.

Why in the moonlight, O wire, so sadly, so constantly moaning?  
Brightly in Argentine's smelters murmurous crucibles bubble;  
Proudly uprears in Topeka the bronze of the dome and the tholus;  
Gaily Pueblo appears with rolling-mills crowning the mesa.

"Come, O my brother, come back; our mother is grieving and dying."  
"Come, O my lover, come back, and I, if you come, will forgive you."



“Come, O my daughter, come back; I wait, and  
must live till I see you.”

“Come, O my husband, come back; the past, if you  
come, is forgotten.”

Moan on, O wire; you are bearing burdens of hearts  
that are breaking;

Kindly the zephyrs of Kansas absorb your æolian  
sorrow.

Listening, listening long, the prairie dog goes to his  
burrow,

Telling the owl and the snake the woes of the gods  
and their sadness.

## THE PALINDROME

SAT a gray and thoughtful soldier  
By his summer Kansas home;  
Came and spoke his freckled nephew,  
“ Uncle, what 's a palindrome ? ”

Smoked the soldier then in silence,  
Wistfully he looked afar,  
Then at last he spoke and answered:  
“ *Raw was I ere I saw waR.* ”

Spoke the nephew: “ War and armies  
Threaten not our Kansas home;  
Do not fight those battles over —  
Tell me, what 's a palindrome ? ”

Slow replied the grizzled soldier,  
“ *Raw was I ere I saw waR.*  
Read it backward, read it forward,  
That is what the words are for.”

“ Life 's a palindrome, my nephew —  
You may run it either way;

Life, from either age or childhood,  
Comes and goes from clay to clay."

It is but a funny riddle  
With a simple thread of truth;  
We can read it up from childhood,  
Then can read it back to youth.

Honest acts and honest thinking  
Pin your future faith upon;  
Working with your best endeavor,  
Let  
" *No evil deed live oN.*"

## THE OLD SOLDIER'S RELIGION

THE Stars and Stripes have stood by me  
In hours of darkest peril;  
I worship them as good enough  
For me in hours of need.  
I know that they will live beyond  
All present forms of creed,  
Because all present forms of creed  
Are sere and drear and sterile.

## PRAIRIE CHILDREN

THIS is the duchess of Lullaby Land,  
Lying asleep on the velvety sward;  
That is an indigo flower in her hand,  
Typical emblem of rank and command,  
Symbol heraldic of lady and lord.

That is her brother asleep at her side;  
He is a duke; and his little red hand  
Grapples the ragged old rope that is tied  
Into the collar of Rover, the guide —  
Rover, the hero of Lullaby Land.

Fishes come out of the water and walk,  
Chipmunks play marbles in Lullaby Land.  
Rabbits rise up on the prairies and talk,  
Goslings go forward and giggle and gawk —  
Everything chatters and all understand.

After awhile he will sail on the sea —  
Little red duke on the prairie asleep;  
Daring the shot and the shell, he shall be

Admiral, fighting for you and for me —  
Flying the flag o'er the dangerous deep.

Down at the Lido, where billows are blue;  
Back through the vineyards to Florence and  
Rome;  
That is our duchess, whom both of us knew;  
That is her husband, so tender and true,  
Taking her far from her babyhood home.

Children at play on the prairies to-day,  
Bravely to-morrow will enter the race,  
Trusting the future whose promises say,  
“Courage and effort will work out a way,  
Fortune and fame are not matters of place!”

## WHIST

HOUR after hour the cards were fairly shuffled  
And fairly dealt, but still I got no hand;  
The morning came, and with a mind unruffled  
I only said. "I do not understand."

Life is a game of whist. From unseen sources  
The cards are shuffled and the hands are dealt;  
Blind are our efforts to control the forces  
That, though unseen, are no less strongly felt.

I do not like the way the cards are shuffled,  
But yet I like the game and want to play;  
And through the long, long night will I, unruffled,  
Play what I get until the break of day.

AD ASTRA PER ASPERA

(1893)

A MOTTO appears  
On the seal of a State—  
Of a State that was born  
While the terror was brewing;  
A motto defying  
The edicts of fate;  
A motto of daring  
A legend of doing.

A perilous past  
And a cavernous gloom  
Had enshrouded the State  
In its humble beginning;  
But courage of soul,  
In repelling the doom,  
Of failure made hope,  
And of losing made winning.

Through scars to the stars,  
Through the pall of the past,



Through the gloom to the gleam  
Rose the State from the peril;  
Then gleam became gloom,  
And the laurels at last  
Were scattered in ashes  
Repugnant and sterile.

But Kansas shall shine  
In the stories and songs  
That are told and are sung  
Of undaunted reliance.  
The gloom yet will gleam,  
And the evils and wrongs  
Will shrivel and crisp  
In the blaze of defiance.

The future shall bury  
The now — as the woe  
On the field of a battle  
By verdure is hidden;  
And hope will return  
Like the harvests that grow  
Where cannon have plowed  
And the cavalry ridden.

## BLAINE OF MAINE

(1884)

LASHED to his flagship's mast,  
Old Farragut, through iron-guarded bays,  
Through fleets of fire, through batteries ablaze,  
By shot and shell harassed,  
While wreck and ruin seemed to block his way,  
And splintered spars spread sprinkling on the spray,  
Guiding his fleet throughout the frightful fray,  
Into the harbor passed;  
And sullen forts grew calm and still  
Beneath the victor's iron will,  
Subdued and crushed at last.

O Blaine! amid the glare  
Of party ruin, take the ship of state;  
We bind thee to its mast, thou statesman great;  
And thine must be the care  
To guide it on through rocks and reefs that vex  
The changing channel with a thousand wrecks.  
And though the surge shall sweep its sacred decks,  
We know thou wilt not spare  
Thy efforts to conduct it by  
The rocks and reefs that seem to lie  
Around it everywhere.

## WINTER

THE sleet  
Will beat,  
And the snow  
Will blow,  
And the rain  
Will drain  
From the plain  
So sadly;  
And the night come down  
So bleak and brown,  
While the blast  
Shrieks past  
So fast  
And madly.

## HEARTS

AS long as the meadows may bloom, and as long  
as the brooks may run.

The brain will forever be winning, as brains have  
forever won,

Commanding the battle of life till the battle of life is  
done.

No, no, the idea is error; the brain never wins the  
fight;

Its contests are seldom decided, its reasonings rarely  
right;

The multitude watches its failures and ridicules with  
delight.

But, long as the grass may be growing, and long as  
the waters run,

The heart will forever be winning, as hearts have  
forever won,

Commanding the battle of life till the battle of life is  
done.

## THE OLD CABIN

UPON the prairie, as the sun is sinking,  
I see the cabin of a pioneer;  
The clapboard roof is lagging to the rear,  
The walls reject their inartistic chinking.

The broken porch hangs in unwilling bondage,  
The truant chimney never has returned,  
And in the fire-place, where the embers burned,  
Defiant sunflowers wave their thoughtless frondage

The waning sunlight seems to flash and flicker,  
And through the empty, open-hearted door,  
And vacant windows, seems to run and pour  
Upon the prairie like a crimson liquor.

With bloom of June the spongy air is swollen;  
The pompous zephyrs slowly swagger by;  
Then comes a purple tremor in the sky,  
And twilight's silence — nature's semicolon.

Here years ago, when civil war had ended,  
A soldier came, and with him came a bride;

He once had charged up Lookout Mountain's side,  
And felled proud oaks when Nashville was defended.

So when he came to Kansas, strong and fearless,  
Fate had no terrors which he dare not face;  
A soldier in the vanguard of the race,  
He did his share to make his country peerless.

Here now is ruin; yet, among the brambles,  
A melancholy rose peeps at the sky,  
And shudders at the footsteps, passing by,  
Of vagrant horses on their aimless rambles.

Upon those pegs, above the chimney mantel,  
A sluggish muzzle-loading musket slept;  
Within the porch, upon that hook, was kept  
An army saddle with a rawhide cantle.

Among the groves, that by the streamlets nestle,  
No more is heard the noise of freighter's camp;  
But in its stead the strange, gigantic tramp  
Of railway trains upon the rumbling trestle.

No more are deer inquisitively peering  
Through brown November at the chimney's smoke;  
No more the vicious stroke and counter-stroke  
Of warring buffalo arrest the hearing.

No more the cyclone, nor the hungry locust,  
Imprint a shadow on the summer sky;  
The drouth has gone — and there have vanished by  
The ills that on the lovers once were focused.

I knew them well — the wife and he now slumber  
Beside the ripples of the Marmaton;  
Both gone away, where years roll on, and on,  
And ever on, and cares no more encumber.

“ Love lives again,” observed the Hebrew rabbin —  
“ Love lives again in worlds succeeding worlds.”  
And so it was. Six boys and four bright girls  
Bade Hope “ Good morning ” in that humble cabin.

From cabins such as these come sturdy natures,  
Who give proud inspiration to a state,  
Who fight its battles and decide its fate,  
Who make its courts and shape its legislatures.

Good-bye, old cabin; time’s relentless rigor  
May grind you up at last to shapeless dust;  
But faithfully have you performed your trust,  
And sheltered manly worth and moral vigor.

## REQUIEM

I AM rambling with the rivers,  
I am falling with the rain,  
I am waving in the woodland,  
I am growing in the grain.

I am marching in the zephyr,  
I am rimpling in the rill,  
I am blooming on the prairie —  
But I live in Kansas still.



## HISTORY

OVER the infinite prairie of level eternity,  
Flying as flies the deer,  
Time is pursued by a pitiless, cruel oblivion,  
Following fast and near.

Ever and ever the famishing coyote is following  
Patiently in the rear;  
Trifling the interval, yet we are calling it "His-  
tory" —  
Distance from wolf to deer.

## ELUSION

THE prairie grasses whispered in my ear  
From year to year,  
Strange melodies whose burning verses stole  
Into my soul,  
Strange songs which ever and anon would come  
And sing themselves to me and hum and hum  
Beyond control.

Yet when I tried to capture, word for word,  
The songs I heard,  
The written verses lost, it seemed to me,  
The pictured melody.  
I had not said that which I tried to say —  
The music had in some uncertain way  
Eluded me.

## THE BLIZZARD

THE fiddler was improvising; at times he would  
cease to play,  
Then shutting his eyes he sang and sang in a wild,  
ecstatic way;  
Then ceasing his song he whipped and whipped the  
strings with his frantic bow,  
Releasing impatient music alternately loud and low;  
Then writhing and reeling he sang as if he were  
dreaming aloud,  
And wrapping the frenzied music around him like a  
shroud;  
And this was the strange refrain, which he sang in  
a minor key,  
“No matter how long the river, the river will reach  
the sea.”

It was midnight on the Cimarron, not many a year ago,  
The blizzard was whirling pebbles and sand, and  
billows of frozen snow;  
He sat on a bale of harness, in a dug-out roofed with  
clay,

The wolves overhead bewailed, in a dismal, protracted  
way,  
They peeped down the 'dobe chimney, and quarreled,  
and sniffed and clawed;  
But the fiddler kept on with his music, as the blizzard  
stalked abroad,  
And time and again that strange refrain came forth in  
a minor key,  
“No matter how long the river, the river will reach  
the sea.”

Around him, on boxes and barrels, uncharmed by the  
fiddler's rune,  
The herders were drinking, and betting their car-  
tridges on vantoons;  
And once in a while a player, in spirit of reckless  
fun,  
Would join in the fiddler's music, and fire off the fid-  
dler's gun.  
An old man sat on a sack of corn and stared with a  
vacant gaze;  
He had lost his hopes in the Gypsum Hills, and he  
thought of the olden days.  
The tears fell fast when the strange refrain came forth  
in a minor key,  
“No matter how long the river, the river will reach  
the sea.”

At morning the tempest ended, and the sun came back  
once more:

The old, old man of the Gypsum Hills had gone to  
the smoky shore.

They chopped him a grave, in the frozen ground where  
the morning sunlight fell,

With a restful look he held in his hand an invisible  
asphodel;

They filled up the grave, and each herder said, “Good-  
bye, till the judgment day.”

But the fiddler stayed, and he sang and played as the  
herders walked away,—

A requiem in a lonesome land, in a mournful minor  
key—

“No matter how long the river, the river will reach  
the sea.”

## THE ORGAN-GRINDER

I 'M ignorant of music, but still, in spite of that,  
I always drop a quarter in an organ-grinder's hat.  
I welcome on the pavement that old, familiar noise,  
Around which gaily gather all the little girls and boys;  
While solemn, sad, and hungry stands, a-turning at  
the crank,  
A nobleman from Europe of attenuated rank.

The nobleman looks sad, but gives with organistic  
glee,  
A ballad of old Ireland, the jewel of the sea —  
“The most distracted country that we have ever  
seen;  
They 're hangin' men and women there for wearin'  
of the green —  
For wearin' of the green, for wearin' of the green:  
They 're hangin' men and women there for wearin'  
of the green.”

And then I think of those who went a-marching off  
with me,

Who claimed a home in Ireland, the jewel of the sea;  
My comrades and my messmates, none braver or  
more true;

Holding aloft the stars and stripes, a-wearing of the  
blue.

Alas! far down in Dixie their many graves are seen;  
Beneath the grassy hillocks they are wearing of the  
green.

Immortal little island! No other land or clime  
Has placed more deathless heroes in the Pantheon of  
time.

Anon the noble Roman brings his music to a halt;  
There seems an indication of a neighboring revolt.  
He takes a change of venue of about a dozen feet,  
And enfildes the windows that are fronting on the  
street.

Around him whirl the girls and boys, with animated  
glee.

Once more he grinds; I recognize "Der Deutscher  
Companie."

"Der Deutscher companie ish der beshtest com-  
panie" —

The music bears me backward to the year of '63.  
I saw a German regiment step out from our brigade;

It marched across a meadow where a hundred cannon  
played;

Its bugles hurled defiance as it skirmished up a slope  
Amid a fire that gave no man the promise of a hope.

They fell like wheat; they came not back; at night  
no bugles played —

There was no German regiment attached to our  
brigade.

The world has seen thy valor, O land of song and  
vine!

Since Hermann plucked the eagles from the ramparts  
of the Rhine.

Down valor's lustrous colonnade is seen the marble  
throng —

Thy warriors and thy scholars, O land of vine and  
song.

About this time the nobleman is asked to take a rest;  
The fires of indignation light his Romulistic breast.

He stops the crank; he gazes up defiantly, yet mute,  
While from the second story there proceeds an ancient  
boot.

With steady gaze he watches it, and, like a man of  
nerve,

He accurately calculates its hyperbolic curve.



He dodges it; he marches on; but soon this man of  
Rome

Begins again to turn the crank,—“Johnny comes  
marching home.”

“When Johnny comes marching home again, hur-  
rah! hurrah!—

The women will sing, the men will shout,

The boys and girls will all turn out;

We ’ll all be gay when Johnny comes marching  
home.”

And then I think of those again who went with me  
to war—

They knew where they were going, and what they  
went there for;

They felt that there was little left of present or of  
past,

Of hope, of home, of future, if the die were wrongly  
cast.

Fires smoldered at the firesides, when the Nation  
called, “To arms!”

My comrades left the forest, the founderies, the  
farms;

They fought the Nation’s battles, on the land and on  
the sea —

Alas! alas! no millionaire to war went off with  
me.

The merit of the country marched, and filled the Union  
ranks —

The money of the country marched, and filled the  
English banks.

At last, when all was over, and Johnny ceased to  
roam —

He came with bugles playing: the specie sneaked back  
home.

O outcast organ-grinder, thy simple ballads start  
The frenzy of the cyclone through the highlands of  
my heart.

Some sneer thy ragged music, because to them there  
comes

No bawling of the bugles, no raving of the drums.

They hear no “boots and saddles” sounding in the  
midnight chill;

They hear no angry cannon thunder up the rocky  
hill;

They hear no canteens rattle; they see no muskets  
shine,

As ranks sweep by in double-quick to brace the  
skirmish line.

Go play thy simple music, O friendless sport of fate.

The ballads of the people are the bulwarks of the  
State.

The bugles that hang dreaming now, like bats upon  
the wall,

Remember well those choruses which rose above the  
call;

And in unconscious musings, these battered bugles  
see

The glories of the future in the centuries to be.

## MILLIONS

MILLIONS of bad men has the world called good,  
Millions of good the world called black and  
bad;

Millions of cowards, strangely understood,  
Have passed for heroes when they never should;  
Millions of heroes never praise have had;  
And cravens will the name of honor rob  
Until the pulse of time shall cease to throb.

## AGED 65

THE last year sped so rapidly away  
It seems that Virgil sang but yesterday.  
The night before saw Abraham in Ur;  
The day before saw Nippur's regal sway.  
The flying years click on as if they were  
The seconds of some vast chronometer.

## WORST AND BEST

CHEER up, my soul; thy worst days are thy best.  
From no estate of work or fate recoil,  
The future hath its corn, and wine and oil.  
Repel repinings with unflinching zest;  
Who seeks for pleasure hath a hopeless quest.  
The days of ease our better life despoil;  
Immersed in the oblivion of toil,  
The hours of self-forgetfulness are blest.

Our worst days are our best; we seldom boast  
Of hours of pleasure, indolence, and ease.  
On present grief we found our future mirth;  
It is our sorrows which we cherish most.  
The soul can never hold,— can scarcely seize  
The evanescent pleasure of the earth.

## SUPERSTITION

A MID the verdure, on the prairies wide,  
There stretches o'er the undulating floor,  
As on the edges of an ocean-shore,  
From east to west, half buried, side by side,  
A chain of boulders, which the icy tide  
Of glacial epochs centuries before  
From arctic hills superfluously bore,  
And left in Southern summers to abide.

So on the landscape of our times is seen  
The rough debris of error's old moraines.  
The superstitions of a thousand creeds,  
Half buried, peer above the waving green ;  
But kindly time will cover their remains  
Beneath a sod of noble thoughts and deeds.

## AN ITALIAN SONNET

A POLITICIAN was Terhune McCarty.  
He found that votes were captured with  
molasses.

He frequented saloons; he jingled glasses;  
He talked about "our great and glorious party."  
In language insincere, and yet most hearty,  
He always eulogized the toiling masses;  
Deplored the brutal wealth of upper classes.  
At last a councilman became McCarty.

He then sang "Hail Columbia,"— "Yankee  
Doodle,"  
And wore a watch-chain bulky as a cable;  
But all at once he dropped his watermelon.  
They caught him lugging off a bag of boodle.  
They stripped him quickly of his party label,  
And jailed him as a self-convicted felon.

## PRINTER'S INK

ONCE spoke a teacher to his pupils, "Name  
The metal that most honors men with fame."

Then shout the pupils, in a chorus, "Steel;  
Before the saber must the scepter reel."

"Wrong," spoke the teacher; "try again and name  
The metal that most honors men with fame."

Then shout the pupils, in a chorus, "Gold;  
For it can buy, and honors all are sold,"

"Wrong," spoke the teacher; "try once more to  
name  
The metal that most honors men with fame."

They all were silent, then spoke one, "I think  
That mighty metal may be printer' zinc."

"Right," spoke the teacher; "for it does not fail  
To make the nations tremble and turn pale."

Then shout the students, in a chorus, "Right—  
The world most honors that which has most might."



## GRIZZLY-GRU

O THOUGHTS of the past and present,  
O whither, and whence, and where,  
Demanded my soul, as I scaled the height  
Of the pine-clad peak in the somber night,  
In the terebinthine air.

While pondering on the frailty  
Of happiness, hope, and mirth,  
The ascending sun with derisive scoff  
Hurled its golden lances and smote me off  
From the bulge of the restless earth.

Through the yellowish dawn of velvet,  
Where stars were so thickly strewn,  
That quietly chuckled as I passed through,  
I fell in the gardens of Grizzly-Gru,  
On the mad, mysterious moon.

I fell on the turquoise ether,  
Low down in the wondrous west,  
And thence to the moon in whose yielding blue  
Were hidden the gardens of Grizzly-Gru,  
In the Monarchy of Unrest.

And there were the fairy gardens,  
Where beautiful cherubs grew  
In daintiest way and on separate stalks,  
In the listed rows by the jasper walks,  
Near the palace of Grizzly-Gru.

While strolling around the garden  
I noticed the rows were full  
Of every conceivable size and type —  
Some that were buds, and some nearly ripe,  
And some that were ready to pull.

In gauzy and white corolla,  
Was one who had eyes of blue,  
A little excuse of a baby nose,  
Little pink ears, and ten little toes,  
And a mouth that kept saying ah-goo.

Ah-gooing as I came near her,  
She raised up her arms in glee —  
Her little fat arms — and she seemed to say,  
“I ’m ready to go with you right away;  
Don’t hunt any more — take me.”

I picked her off quick and kissed her,  
And, hugging her to my breast,  
I heard a loud yelling that pierced me through,  
’T was His Terrible Eminence, Grizzly-Gru,  
Of the Monarchy of Unrest.

He had on a blood-red turban,  
A picturesque lot of clothes,  
With big moustaches both fierce and black,  
And a ghastly saber to cut and hack,  
And shoes that turned up at the toes.

Out of the gate of the garden  
The cherub and I took flight,  
And closely behind us the saber flew,  
And back of the saber came Grizzly-Gru,  
And he chased us all day till night.

I ran down the lunar crescent,  
And out on the silver horn;  
I kissed the baby and held her tight,  
And jumped down into the starry night,  
And — I lit on the earth at morn.

He fitfully threw his saber,  
It missed and went round the sun;  
He followed no further, he was not rash,  
But the baby held on to my coarse moustache,  
And seemed to enjoy the fun.

In saving that blue-eyed baby  
From the gardens of Grizzly-Gru,  
I suffered a terrible shock and fright;  
But the doctor believes it will be all right,  
And he thinks he can pull me through.

## THE BLUE-BIRD OF NOVEMBER

THE wind is howling wildly, like a drove of lean  
kiyutes;

The steel-clad, floating, freezing storm-cloud from  
the northwest comes.

I'm in my cheerful office, reading poems, and my  
boots

Are stuck up at the stove, which with a blazing  
hodful hums.

I'm reading of a blue-eyed, wandering, hopeful little  
princess looking for a home.

I lay my book of poems upside down upon a  
chair —

I step up to the window, where a box of fine-cut  
stands;

Says I, "By jings, these princesses are getting mighty  
rare,

And always have such *dreadful* times with lovers  
and with plans;

I'd like to see a useless, blue-eyed, wandering little  
princess looking for a home.

## The Blue-Bird of November 149

‘The world is full of sympathy, the world is full of homes;

The world is full of friendships, though hidden they may be;

When gone are friends and sympathy, perforce the creature roams,

Invoking them, imploring them, at large, o’er land and sea.”

That’s what this sentimental poet writes about this blue-eyed little princess looking for a home.

See here, you straggling blue-bird, hopping on the window sill!

You hop and flop and flutter, like a worn-out Greeley flag.

You’d better hunt your roosting-place; it’s winter and it’s chill,

And hoarse, bleak, evening ice-storms after one another tag.

Says she, “Unhappy me; I’m nothing but a wandering, useless little blue-bird, hunting for a home.”

Says I, “Then skip for Texas, it is n’t far away;

Go down to where the gulf mists through the orange branches troop;

Fly off to where the sunshine dances on Aransas Bay,

The winter-blooming Brazos, the vine-lined Guadeloupe.

If I were an itinerant, useless, homeless blue-bird.  
with your wings, I'd find a home."

Says she, "Speak not of Guadeloupe, the Brazos, or  
the Bay —

The winter-blooming prairies of that sunny-hearted  
zone;

I have flown through orange branches, I have floated  
on the spray;

I discover no companions, and I find myself alone.  
I find myself a lonesome, sad, unsocial little blue-bird.  
longing for a home."

Into the raging stove I then did hurl a hod of coal.

And raising up the winter-crustled sash-bar from the  
sill,

Says I, "Your lonesome feelings I to some extent  
condole.

Hop in; here 's food and firelight, be a tenant at  
your will;

And listen while I read a lovely, long-haired poem of  
a blue-eyed princess looking for a home.

"The world is full of happiness, the world is full of  
homes,

## The Blue-Bird of November 151

The world is full of sympathy, though hidden it  
may be;

When gone are friends and sympathy, perforce the  
creature roams,

Princess or blue-bird, seeking them, over the land  
or sea."

That 's what this gifted, wild-eyed, transcendental poet  
says about his blue-eyed little princess looking  
for a home.

The blue-bird entered gaily, then quicker than a wink  
She darted out and left me, ere the window could  
be closed.

I said, you little blue-bird, you 'd better stop and think;  
But, then, you 're like these princesses. It 's just as  
I supposed.

You 'd be unhappy were you not a roaming, rambling,  
useless wanderer with no home.

## KARMYL

ON the eastern shore of Kansas,  
Half a million years or so  
Back among the jeweled eons,  
Did I love the Princess Karmyl,  
Long ago.

Bluer were her eyes than autumn  
Mists of morning, and her hair  
Was as wavy and as yellow  
As the sunbeams of the languid  
August air.

'Mid the parks around the palace  
And the tree-ferns, did we stray,  
Laughing at the tame dinornis  
And the petted pterodactyls'  
Awkward play.

'Neath the palm trees by the ocean  
Did we watch the summer gales,  
Watch the ships from far Atlantis,  
And the Uxmal galleys with their  
Linen sails.



By the inland Kansas ocean,  
Half a million years or so  
Back among the silver cycles,  
Did I love the Princess Karmyl,  
Long ago.

But the blue-eyed Princess Karmyl  
Grieved her saddened soul away  
When I lost my life in battle,  
Fighting for her father's kingdom,  
With Cathay.

Years have fled—the sea grew shallow  
When the great Atlantis sank;  
Then a change of the equator  
Made the power of warlike Uxmal  
Lose its rank.

Now the undulating prairie,  
With a wealth of verdant loam,  
Shows a sea of billows greener  
Than when galleys from Atlantis  
Plowed the foam.

But the blue-eyed little Karmyl  
With her sunshine is not there;  
And I fear she never will be,  
For they tell me she is living  
In Altair.

## QUESTION

TO his courtier spake the Czar,  
Looking o'er the fields afar:  
“Count the plowmen that you see,  
And their number tell to me.”

From the palace porch afar  
Looked and answered he the Czar:  
“In the distance there are two —  
“Two are all there are in view.”

“Rightly spoken,” said the Czar,  
“Two the men that plowing are;  
Tell their number, if you can,  
If we call that plow a man.”

Quickly answered he the Czar:  
“Two the men now plowing are;  
Call that plow a man, and then  
Three the number of the men.”

Flashed with anger then the Czar,  
And his eye gleamed like a star,

As he looked the courtier through:

“Wrong, sir, wrong! still, only two.

“Who shall stand beside a Czar,

With an empire spreading far?

Who shall give advice to kings,

Knowing not that things are things?

“By the edict of the Czar,

To the Caucasus afar

Go! until thou knowest when

Things are things, and men are men.’

## THE REASON

SAYS John last night:  
“William, by grab! I’m beat  
To know why stolen kisses  
Taste so sweet.”

Says William: “Sho!  
That ’s easily explained —  
It ’s ’cause they ’re *syrup-*  
titiously obtained.”

. . . . .  
O cruel thought!  
O words of cruel might!  
The coroner  
He sat on John that night.

## POLITICS

MANY the childhood friends of mine  
That started ahead of me,  
Fearless in ignorance, buoyant in hope,  
To sail on the vitriol sea.  
Little they knew of the depth or the scope  
Of the treacherous vitriol sea.

Some of them sailed in painted boats,  
Most beautiful things to see:  
Gossamer boats of ephemeral wood,  
As fragile as ever could be;  
Soon to discover that wood was not good  
In the cankering vitriol sea.

Many tried brass, and some tried glass,  
To sail on the vitriol sea;  
Mindless alike of corrosion or storms  
They sailed with hilarious glee,  
Happy to-day, but to-morrow in swarms  
To be sunk in the vitriol sea.

“Where did they wish to go,” you ask,  
“That sailed on the vitriol sea?”  
That is a something I never shall know,  
A mystery even to me.  
All that I know is, they wanted to go,  
And to sail on the vitriol sea.

## THE OLD KANSAS VETERAN

**A**N agèd soldier, with his hair snow-white,  
Sat looking at the night.

A busy shining angel came, with things  
Like chevrons on his wings.

He said. "The evening detail has been made —  
Report to your brigade."

The soldier heard the message that was sent;  
Then rose, and died, and went.

## PASS

A FATHER said unto his hopeful son,  
“Who was Leonidas, my cherished one?”  
The boy replied, with words of ardent nature,  
“He was a member of the legislature.”  
“How?” asked the parent; then the youngster  
saith:  
“He got a pass, and held her like grim death.”  
“Whose pass? what pass?” the anxious father  
cried;  
“’T was the’r monopoly,” the boy replied.

In deference to the public, we must state,  
That boy has been an orphan since that date.

## PARESIS

ON the shores of Yellow Paint  
I have heard the tempest roar;  
I have heard the falling crash  
Of the lightning-riven ash:

Seen the branches of the oak  
Like the world at large, half-broke; —  
Seen the shattered sycamore.

Men and trees are scarcely twain,  
And the rules alike obtain,  
For the highest of renown  
Are the surest stricken down;  
But the stupid and the clown  
They remain.



## THE FORT SCOTT "OWL"

[Newspaper]

AS the lingering, languorous lunkhead  
Is wending his wandering way  
Over the Kansas prairies,  
In the dusk of declining day,  
He sees in the twinkling twilight  
The gleaming and jeweled germs  
Of that prophecy of the future  
Where the murmuring Marmaton murmurs.

When the arc-lights prop the midnight,  
When gore from the pale moon drips;  
When the red-headed comets are feeling  
Their way through the vast ellipse;  
When the Charioteer is a-lashing  
His steeds through the globulous gloom  
As nebulae spot their pale blue sides  
With fleckings of fiery spume,  
The Owl on the murmuring Marmaton  
Is waking the echoing bluff  
With the roar of advanced ideas  
And the gush of a gorgeous guff.

11

## THE GRANGER'S TEXT

LONG the Topeka convention wrangled,  
“ Good men for office ” got into a balk,  
Grange nominations were hopelessly tangled,  
Sargent got up and gave them a talk;  
Said to the delegates quarreling so:  
“ Smooth it over and let it go.”

Many a time I have thought of the quarrel  
That “ good men for office ” so often reach;  
Many a time I have thought that a moral  
Shone like a lantern in Sargent's speech,  
When he suggested to friend and foe,  
“ Smooth it over and let it go.”

When a fierce editor, boiling with fury,  
Paints you with hot editorial tar,  
Don't start a libel suit, don't hire a jury,  
Don't seek redress from the bench or the bar;  
Lies sometimes vanish, facts always grow—  
“ Smooth it over and let it go.”

When you consent to be placed on a ticket,  
When you have made up your mind to run,

Speed it your best — the political thicket  
Tears off your clothes, but makes lots of fun;  
If you are minus a vote or so,  
“Smooth it over and let it go.”

Efforts and hopes may be lighter or graver,  
Either in politics, business, or fame;  
Things may go crooked, and friendships may waver,  
Nevertheless, the rule is the same;  
Facts will be facts; when you find it so,  
“Smooth it over and let it go.”

## THE LEAP-YEAR PARTY

A ROUND the hall  
I see the fairies trooping  
In merry promenade;  
Along the wall,  
Disconsolately drooping,  
Masculine wall-flowers fade.

Those hands which once  
They squeeze with solemn rapture,  
Days of old,  
Are now beyond  
All present power to capture  
Or to hold.

And now the caller,  
*Cum volante grando*,  
Shrieks down the hall;  
Anon the orchestra,  
With harsh *sforzando*,  
Insists on "balance all."

*O, tempora !*

The present time and custom —  
The atmospheric spirit of the age,  
Have made these women  
So we cannot trust 'em.  
Who knows what ills the present  
may presage ?

Of that event  
The deepening shadows lengthen;  
While far away  
We see the fast  
Combining clouds, that strengthen  
Our terror of that day.

## ADVICE \$5

**I**F the railroad kills your stock,  
And you want to get even,  
And they will not fix it up,  
The way to do it  
Is to get a keg of soap,  
Of about forty gallons,  
And stick a little scrub-broom into it.

Then sweep down the track  
For about a half a mile,  
Then return to the place  
Where you commence;  
Then smash your little keg  
And throw away your broom,  
And mount the nearest  
Stake-and-ridered fence.

Then you 'll bust yourself a-laughing  
At the engineer a-swearing,  
And the engine wheels a-turning  
Round and round.  
And you 'll fall off from the rider,  
And you 'll break your spinal column,  
And your folks will take and  
Plant you in the ground.

## THE WHISPERER

HE never tried to make a speech;  
A speech was far beyond his reach.  
He did n't even dare to try;  
He did his work upon the sly.  
He took the voter to the rear  
And gently whispered in his ear.

He never wrote; he could not write;  
He never tried that style of fight.  
No argument of his was seen  
In daily press or magazine.  
He only tried to get up near  
And whisper in the voter's ear.

It worked so well that he became  
A person of abundant fame.  
He could n't write; he could n't speak,  
But still pursued his course unique.  
He had a glorious career—  
He whispered in the voter's ear.

## THE SIEGE OF DJKLXPRWBZ

BEFORE a Turkish town  
The Russians came,  
And with huge cannon  
Did bombard the same.

They got up close  
And rained fat bombshells down,  
And blew out every  
Vowel in the town.

And then the Turks,  
Becoming somewhat sad,  
Surrendered every  
Consonant they had.



## THEBÆ

THIRTY or forty centuries or so,  
We can't be certain, it's so long ago,  
A youth named Kadmus lived in ancient Tyre;  
But much against the wishes of his sire  
He learned to be a dentist, and expressed  
A strong intention of removing West.

One day he packed his teeth in a valise,  
And with his forceps sailed away for Greece;  
And Kadmus shook, so ancient legends state,  
His bi- and for-ceps in the teeth of fate.  
Ah! those old times did certainly presage  
What Prentis calls: Our ripsnortiferous age.

About the time the land of Greece became  
A proper subject of pre-emption claim,  
Young Kadmus viewed the most important spots,  
Selected one, and laid it out in lots;  
Denied he was a dentist, and beneath  
The verdant sod he buried tools and teeth.

He bought a charter, then walked up and down  
The Grecian coast a-shouting for his town.  
He called it Thebæ, and in course of time  
The price of corner lots began to climb,  
And so it was young Kadmus here became  
A candidate for poverty and fame.

## AN ODE TO WATER

I NEVER made a prohibition speech,  
Nor eulogized thee as a proper beverage;  
But there is one conclusion which I reach:  
That there are spheres in which thou hast the  
leverage.  
And though I don't expect to use thee freely,  
I'll speak no more of thee with contumely.

Although for food thou art not well designed,  
More due, perhaps, to thy extreme fluidity;  
And though thou dost at times drown human kind,  
And wipe out towns with unforeseen rapidity;  
And though thou lackest that fine beady flavor  
Which if thou hadst would give thee much more  
favor:

Still, thou dost make the wheat and corn crops grow,  
While then the people seem content with amity,  
And no old played-out politicians go  
Around and sound the hew-gag of calamity;  
And all the people seem to have some reason;  
And all the crops somehow arrive in season.

I've almost made my mind up that I'll try  
And get accustomed to thy potability;  
Since thou as rain descending from the sky  
Dost give us such political tranquillity,  
For every time thou comest as a soaker  
Thou endest all there is of some old croaker.

1884

O'ER sunny Kansas  
Some commercial Cadmus,  
In days unknown,  
The teeth of golden dragons must  
have sown;  
For when the prairies  
Feel the breath of summer,  
The trowels ring,  
And from the soil the burnished  
cities spring.

## A BALLAD IN "G"

### I

A MAN with a marvelous mug  
Rode out of Fort Scott on a nag;  
He carried a jug in a bag,  
And many and many a swig  
Reposed in that corpulent jug;  
And a cob fitted in for a plug  
As snug as a snag in a bog.

The nag had a wigglety jig  
Which churned up the jag in the jug;  
And along by its side went a dog  
Which jiggled along in a jog,  
With a narrative shaggy and sag,  
Which he wearily, warily wug.

O! That jig, and that jog and that jag: —  
O! that jog, and that jag, and that jug.

### II

The man shouted "Whoa" — to the nag,  
Then took out the jug from the bag,

Then took out the plug from the jug,  
And then from the jug took a jag.—  
A terrible, horrible jag  
Which acted as quick as a drug.

He shouted “Yip-yip” to the nag,  
And dug in his heels with a dig,  
And the nag who would never renig  
Sprang off with the speed of a stag.  
Then the man with a marvelous mug  
Began a vociferous brag:

“Whoo-pee — I’m a bird on a crag,  
I’m a thief, and a wolf, and a thug,  
I’m a bug-eater hunting a bug.  
O, I can hold more than a kag,  
And I have got boodle and swag  
That says that my grave don’t get dug.”

### III

To the front with a yelp went the dog —  
And — shouting “Yip-yip!” to the nag —  
Pell-mell with the jug and the bag  
Went the man with the marvelous mug.  
And there in the road lay a hog  
As still as a bump on a log.

Then down in a pile went the nag,  
And the dog and the hog and the jug,  
And that was the end of the hog,  
And that was the end of the dog,  
And vain were his efforts to wag  
The narrative previously wug.  
And limber and limp as a rag  
In a wad on his lug lay the nag.

## IV

And the man with the marvelous mug  
Rolled up like a cavalry flag,  
Done up like a family rug,  
Lay there with his head in the bag.  
And twenty feet off stood the jug —  
The opulent, corpulent jug —  
Unharmed, while the loyal cob plug  
Held down what was left of the jag.

And this is the song of the jag,  
And the jug, and the jog, and the jig.  
And this is the song of the nag,  
Of the nag that would never renig,  
And the dog and the hog and the bag —  
A song of the swag and the swig.

## WARFARE

“OH, what a horrid thing this warfare is!”  
Then Jim replied, “You’re very much  
mistaken;

I joined the home-guards when Price struck Fort  
Scott,

And then our *fare* was hard-bread, coffee, bacon.”

“The *fare* of war, I am not talking of!”

Responded William, with an angry shout;

“Oh, yes, I see,” says Jim; “well, of the *war*,  
The *fare*’s all I know anything about.”



## TWENTIETH KANSAS INFANTRY

(A SONG)

OUT of San Francisco Bay,  
On a dappled autumn day,  
Sailed our regiment across the western main;  
From the flag with rosy bars,  
From the flag with tangled stars,  
Flashed defiance at the crown of haughty Spain.

Sad and sorrowful the scenes,  
Far among the Philippines,  
As we marched and fought by mountain and by  
shore; —  
Pressing on from place to place  
As the heralds of our race, —  
Yet we thought and sang of Kansas o'er and o'er.

“There 's a cosy little cottage by the Kaw,  
Where the cottonwoods are nodding now and then,  
As the languid river flows,  
And the yellow sunflowers doze; —  
We will return, we will return again.”

In the glamor and the glare  
Of the glory which we share,

Now we think of those we left in far-off lands;—  
As upon their distant graves  
Sound the threnodies of waves,—

Silver lipped and silver tipped on jeweled sands.

When our duty had been done,  
When the battles had been won,

Into peace and pieces went our regiment;  
We had set the flag on high,  
We had fixed it in the sky,  
And we sang of hopes and hearts as home we  
went,—

“There’s a cosy little cottage by the Kaw,  
Where the cottonwoods are nodding now and then,  
As the languid river flows,  
And the yellow sunflowers doze ;—  
We will return, we will return again.”

There my father at the door  
Sits and fights his battles o’er,—

Tells of Sherman and Atlanta and the sea,—  
And he says in quiet way:  
“War with Spain was only play,—  
But was right because it set a people free.

“Races get what they deserve,  
Some must fight and some must serve,—  
Kansas never left a battle-field unwon,—  
And as centuries grow ripe  
To the westward goes the type;  
It's our destiny to travel with the sun.”

“There's a cosy little cottage by the Kaw,” etc.

ON A PAINTING, BY LEEMPUTTEN

AS the evening shadows creep  
Over wood and hill and dale,  
Homeward through the quiet vale  
Come the shepherd and the sheep.

In life's quiet twilight gloam,  
Through life's somber evening haze,  
Troop the thoughts of other days,  
Flock our tired ambitions home.

## A KANSAS IDYL

INTO a frontier town of Kansas came  
An aborigine in moccasins and war paint;  
And he bore the look — wan look — of the  
Untutored savage. And there also came  
A proud Caucasian, in boots and spurs and pistols  
Clad — a rover, full of strange oaths, and  
Bearded, like his pard. He had a classic  
Brow. In youth, at Yale, a stroke-oar he  
Had been, and deemed a youth of power and  
Culture rare. They, each to each a stranger,  
Sought this Kansas village in pursuit  
Of ardent spirits. Prohibition held full sway.  
The unrelenting man of drugs and  
Merchandise refused to sell the article  
Demanded. Away in anger and disgust  
The proud Caucasian strode, and as  
His fervid language percolated through  
The filmy ether, spectators at a distance  
Thought that an aurora borealis was  
On exhibition. Back to his ranch returning,  
He to bed went sober. But the aborigine

With more stoicism met refusal from  
The man of drugs, and purchasing of hair oil  
A quart bottle, to his wigwam went.  
Into that oil that aborigine some water poured,  
And by a process of disintegration the  
Alcohol, with which the oil was cut,  
United with the water, and the oil,  
Floating above, was gently skimmed away.  
And then the noble aborigine proceeded  
To become inebriated, and well did he  
Succeed, and went to bed in a condition  
Which the rover would have envied.

'T is ever thus with the untutored savage,  
Who yearning after nature's means and measures,  
With pure and child-like instinct seeks to ravage  
The dim arcana of its mystic pleasures,  
And wrest from nature's vault its cryptic treasures.  
While by his side, clogged with redundant learning,  
The proud Caucasian swears, and gets left, yearning

## THE JACKPOT

I SAUNTERED down through Europe,  
I wandered up the Nile,  
I sought the mausoleums where the mummied  
Pharaohs lay;  
I found the sculptured tunnel  
Where quietly in style  
Imperial sarcophagi concealed the royal clay.  
Above the vault was graven deep the motto of the  
crown:  
“Who openeth a jackpot may not always rake it  
down.”

It's strange what deep impressions  
Are made by little things.  
Within the granite tunneling I saw a dingy cleft;  
It was a cryptic chamber.  
I drew, and got four kings.  
But on a brief comparison I laid them down and left,  
Because upon the granite stood that sentence bold and  
brown:  
“Who openeth a jackpot may not always rake it  
down.”

I make this observation:

A man with such a hand  
Has psychologic feelings that perhaps he should not  
feel,  
But I was somewhat rattled  
And in a foreign land,  
And had some dim suspicions, as I had not watched  
the deal.  
And there was that inscription, too, in words that  
seemed to frown:  
“Who openeth a jackpot may not always rake it  
down.”

These letters were not graven  
In Anglo-Saxon tongue;  
Perhaps if you had seen them you had idly passed  
them by.  
I studied erudition  
When I was somewhat young;  
I recognized the language when it struck my classic  
eye;  
I saw a maxim suitable for monarch or for clown:  
“Who openeth a jackpot may not always rake it  
down.”

Detesting metaphysics,  
I cannot help but put



A philosophic moral where I think it ought to hang;  
I've seen a "boom" for office

Grow feeble at the root,

Then change into a boomlet — then to a boomerang.

In caucus or convention, in village or in town:

"Who openeth a jackpot may not always rake it  
down."

## A SEA-RIOUS STORY

FROM Panama to San Francisco Bay,  
An overcrowded steamship sailed away.

The third day out, a husky miner came  
Up to the clerk, and calling him by name,

He said: "Your ship is crowded, sir, a heap  
Too much for me; find me a place to sleep."

The clerk responded, with a stately smile:  
"Sleep where you've been a-sleeping all the while."

"It kay n't be did," the miner answered quick.

"I slept upon a deck-hand who was sick;

"He's convalessed, and now since he is stronger,  
He swears he won't endure it any longer."

The clerk was pleased to hear the miner's mirth,  
And fixed him with a "snifter" and a berth.

## A QUININE DREAM

*[While damming Paint Creek last week, got the ague, took forty grains of quinine, attended a prohibition meeting, and was sick three days.]*

EIGHTY elephants in line  
Watched a turkey made of pine  
Hang a bag of roasted peanuts to a string of cotton  
twine.

Then a boy whose name was Billy  
Fed a monkey with a lily  
While the monkey's younger brother looked unusu-  
ally silly

When Yum! Yum! Yum!  
Went the girl with pepsin gum  
A man who uses metaphor  
Insisted he should pet her for  
Her wayward absent lover who would never, never  
come.

Then the Public Square curled up  
And an epileptic pup

Went to blinking and to drinking something yellow  
from a cup.

Then a deacon caught a tartar  
Tied him firmly with a garter  
To a patent ice-cream freezer where he perished like  
a martyr

When Bang! Bang! Bang!  
Loud an old revolver rang  
A man whose name was Galloway  
Obstructing a dark alley-way  
Was scared so bad he ran and talked a quantity of  
slang.

Then a huckleberry pie  
Bade its relatives good-bye  
As a spotted Norman dray-horse wiped the moist-  
ure from its eye.

Soon a gloomy man named Purdy  
Started up a hurdy-gurdy  
While a chap of nineteen winters called a freckled  
female "Birdie."

When Boom! Boom! Boom!  
Came a gloaming through the gloom  
A voice that seemed auxiliary  
To shot-gun and distillery  
And seemingly constructed of concussion and per-  
fume.

Then a thousand pulleys whirr  
And the roofs begin to stir  
While a feline makes a bee-line to a fence to save her  
fur.

Then a talented attorney  
Who had just arrived from Smyrna  
Tries to interest a lamp-post with the details of his  
journey

When Whack! Whack! Whack!

Forty peelers beat him black

And then with language cursory

They take him to a nursery

And plant him sixteen inches down below the zodiac

## NEW YEAR'S CARDS

### THE OLD YEAR

THE old year said: "Young was I at the start,  
But cares came fast and now with broken heart  
I'll do as all the New Year's callers do,—  
Smile, take a cup of coffee and depart."

### THE NEW YEAR

O NEW YEAR, greet the old,  
And hide as it has hid  
The sights which we have saw,  
The deeds which we have did.

## RETROSPECTIVE

[1882]

THROUGH the days so mild and mellow  
While the leaves were growing yellow,  
We did bellow — loudly bellow  
For a platform full of “isms”;  
Many others did as we did,  
But our efforts were unheeded,  
For the people said they needed  
More of sense, and less of schisms.

Female suffrage! Prohibition! —  
We are now in a position  
To demand a new edition —  
A revision, as of yore;  
And the late lamented martyr,  
He has got a little starter  
To the shades where many a smarter —  
Smarter man has gone before.

Let us relegate our preachers  
To their desks as moral teachers;  
Governments were made for creatures

## Rhymes of Ironquill

That are living now on earth;  
Not for angels that wear laurels,  
But for men with woes and quarrels—  
Men of vice as well as morals,  
Men of grief as well as mirth.

If a man is on an isthmus,  
Or is troubled with strabismus,  
You can talk from June till Christmas —  
He is still as narrow-sighted;  
Add to this a poor digestion,  
And the world must be refreshed on  
Some important moral question,  
And instanter must be righted.

Yes! that platform was a jewel;  
It were cruel, very cruel,  
Now to use it up for fuel,  
But it must and will be done;  
And our short-haired female brother  
And our long-haired other, t'other  
Brother — he must find another,  
Go and get another one.

When the party gets less antic  
Over "isms," and less frantic  
Over frauds that sycophantic  
Fools rehearse.



Then the party will be victor,  
 And will march—why, bless your pictur!—  
 Prouder than a Roman lictor;  
 Now it's lict—or worse.

### THINK TWICE

RESULTS are often grievous  
 When people get too previous;  
 "Think twice" is good advice.  
 A man can speak much keener,  
 Aggressively and meaner,—  
 Before you speak think twice.

### A POKER GAME

LIFE is but a poker game:  
 Play it fair.  
 Win or lose is all the same:  
 Play it fair.  
 If in fortune you may bet,  
 If unlucky do not fret,  
 It is irritating, yet  
 Play it fair.

## THE KANSAS JAIL

(1900)

I HEAR the lowing of the distant herd,  
I hear the blackbirds carol at the morn.  
They sing and sing as if with joy deferred  
They brought good tidings telling word by word,  
“The jail is full of corn.”

The merry zephyrs now no longer see  
A broken-hearted landscape lean and lorn,  
But as they whirl they whisper in their glee,  
“Things are more halcyon than they used to be,—  
The jail is full of corn.”

The horse-thief went. The cowboy joined the church,  
The justice of the peace is laughed to scorn,  
The constable has tumbled from his perch,  
The school has left the sheriff in the lurch,—  
The jail is full of corn.

## ALGOMAR

IOLINE, my Ioline,  
Will you be no more my queen;  
Must you always stay?  
Is my waiting unavailing,  
Must all wishes end in failing,  
Must all hope decay?  
Must all happiness at last  
Fade into the past?

It is longer than a year  
Since you came to see me here,  
Earnest Ioline;  
Since you came in moonlight beamy,  
Came to cheer me and to see me,  
To be loved and seen;  
Since you left that pearly star,  
Far-off Algomar.

Come and sing to me once more,  
As you often have before,  
Songs of other zones.  
Come and hum those airy, sketchy  
Arias, so bright and catchy,  
Taken from the tones  
That, unheard by human ears,  
Thrill the radiant spheres.

## A SHINING MARK

A MAN came here from Idaho  
With lots of mining stock.  
He brought along as specimens  
A lot of mining rock.

The stock was worth a cent a pound  
If stacked up in a pile.  
The rock was worth a dollar and  
A half per cubic mile.

We planted him at eventide,  
'Mid shadows dim and dark;  
We fixed him up an epitaph,—  
“Death loves a mining shark.”

## THE PRODIGAL SON

**H**E tramped from Tyre to Sidon  
With his sandals on his arm,  
And then he struck for Jordan  
And the big ancestral farm.

His mantle it was full of burs,  
His noble brow was wet.  
The fatted calf it tugged upon  
A horse-hair lariat.

His father ran to meet him:  
“Right glad,” said he, “I am.  
Your trunk got home. Your ma  
Is well. We got your telegram.

“To-morrow night the banquet is;  
Your auntie reads a pome,  
And you respond unto a toast,  
‘There ’s nary place like home.’”

The prodigal looked sad, and then  
With choking voice said he,

“Good-bye, good-bye, old home;  
Them husks is good enough for me.”

Then came a dull and sickening thud,  
That no one could forget —  
That calf, in glee, had run and bust  
That horse-hair lariat!

## FUNSTON AND HOBSON

[About three weeks before the declaration of war by the United States against Spain, the piece entitled "Kansas to Alabama" was published in St. Louis. Four days after the publication an answer appeared, entitled "Alabama to Kansas." It is curious to note that the war did produce two national heroes and popular idols,—Hobson in Cuba, on the part of Alabama, and Funston in the Philippines, on the part of Kansas. The authorship of the Alabama reply cannot be given, as inquiries were not answered.]

### KANSAS TO ALABAMA

ARE you there, are you there, Alabam?  
There seems to be a lot of trouble coming.  
There's music in the air, Alabam,—  
The music of the fife and the drumming.  
Be my pard, be my pard,  
And we'll fight them mighty hard,  
Alabam.

Our old war made it plain, Alabam,  
We neither one was lacking spunk or mettle.  
This little round with Spain, Alabam,  
Will have a question I would like to settle.

## Rhymes of Ironquill

Can you march day and night  
And outfight me in the fight,  
Alabama?

If you should, if you should, Alabam,  
My sunflower on your bosom I'll be pinning;  
Might feel sore — but I would, Alabam —  
I'd honor both the hero and the winning.  
Here's to you, here's to you,  
And to what we both can do,  
Alabam.

## ALABAMA TO KANSAS

Bet your life, bet your life, Kansas boy,  
The Yankee and the Johnnie are for Cuba.  
Just hail me with your fife, Kansas boy;  
I'll answer with my Alabama tuba.  
Count me in, count me in,  
I am eager to begin,  
Kansas boy.

Here's my hand, here's my hand, Kansas boy,  
The cotton-bloom to sunflower sends greeting;  
On the ocean and the land, Kansas boy,  
Soon the grandees and the dons we'll be meeting.



North and South, heart to heart,  
Nevermore will fight apart,  
Kansas boy.

Get your flag, get your flag, Kansas boy,  
If you fall I will anchor it in glory;  
'T is not for me to brag, Kansas boy —  
I fought it once — but that 's another story.  
Light is come, wrong is past,  
Now I'm Union to the last,  
Kansas boy.

## MY FIRST WIFE

O! THE poise of her head —  
Down her queenly neck fell a brown cascade,  
With a tinge of red;  
When she lifted her finger at me and said,  
“Young man,” although I was not afraid,  
Yet there came a sort of hypnotic thrill;  
And it made me reflect that soon or late  
I would have some question to ask of Fate  
In regard to myself and a woman's will.

I had heard in my youth,  
That around the heart  
Of each wholesome man —  
And I know it's the truth —  
From the very start,  
By some unknown plan,  
There is knotted and tied  
A single lone hair, and the hair is **red**;  
And when it unties  
The person dies,  
Or is broken-hearted — the same as dead;  
I know it's so, for I've seen it tried.

And I hold it true that never a man  
Fought life and fought death, and fought friend  
and foe,  
For a woman's smile or a woman's fan,  
Whether to-day or long ago,  
Unless the tresses upon her head  
Showed red, or at least a shade of red.

Now, what could I guess  
When in every tress  
Of my first wife's hair was that shade of red?  
And what could I know, or what express  
When around my heart I could feel the twine  
And the twist of a ligature firm and fine,  
And what could I say, or what could be said,  
When as clear as a note  
From her velvet throat  
Came the words, "Young man,"  
With the toss of her head?

O! the follies of life!  
O! the fatal mistakes!  
O! the strain and the strife  
And the sorrow that breaks  
And wrenches apart  
The trusting heart.

But yet — my first wife —

She was ever serene;

She never would cry and never would grieve.

No woman was ever like her, I ween:

And never was yet any daughter of Eve,

As I used to repeat, and I now believe,

More worthy than she to be christened a queen.

She never eloped — we did not part —

There was nothing outward of grief or woe;

No neighbors whispered, “I told you so,”

And the tight red band that was 'round my heart —

It never untied and let me go.

And then, of course,

There was no divorce.

I gave her no cause, and she gave me none.

Unless I could say

That her haughty way

Of saying, “Young man!” though perhaps in fun,

Was a ground for divorce, though the only one.

Oh, the golden Now, so mute and so dumb,

As, with hopes aglow

And with hearts ablaze

We wait for the futures yet to come.

Oh, the halcyon days  
Of the happy past  
That go so fast,  
And yet so slow!  
How little there is for us all to know!

And why must a man  
Love once for all?  
Once — only once; and tell, if you can,  
Why a woman whose hair has a tinge of red,  
Be she ever so small  
Or ever so tall,  
Will keep on a-loving until she 's dead —  
And a good deal longer, I 've heard it said.

So happiness seems  
To hang on a hinge,  
And to be the product of a tinge;  
And that is the reason why, in my dreams,  
I see the floating, as of a fringe,  
A brown with a delicate shade of red;  
And I feel the ligature 'round my heart.  
It has n't untied or snapped apart,  
And she is alive — not dead.

Of course she 's alive,  
And her children five

Are up at the house, and so is she;  
For she is my first and my only wife —  
My only wife — upon my life —  
For — no second wife for me.

## THE PHOTO-GRAPH-U-IST

YES, very many pictures this photo-graphist took;  
He glued them to a pasteboard, and stuck them  
in a book,  
So when you wished to see them, all you had to do  
was look.

To have their pictures taken, with joyousness and glee  
A flock of little maidens came, and one of them, oh,  
she  
Was just as sweet and beautiful as beautiful could be.

Alas! our photo-graph-u-ist was captured from the  
start,  
For when she "struck her attitude" with such an  
artless art,  
She glued her blue-eyed picture to his pasteboard and  
his heart.

She left the latter picture for her worshiper to keep,  
So well had it been taken, so accurate, so deep —  
It robbed him of his happiness, and even of his sleep.

Ah, yes! that blue-eyed photograph did haunt him  
day and night;

Although he closed his peepers, it floated on his sight.  
At last he says: "A note to her I will write out out-  
right.

"O blue-eyed little maiden, I never would invade  
The old time-honored usages that courtesy hath made,  
Unless I had an object which I could n't have delayed.

"Allow me, little maiden, now, to diffidently say,  
How ceaselessly a photograph doth haunt me night  
and day,—  
How vainly mental effort tries to banish it away.

"This picture in my memory unceasingly doth dwell,  
It follows like a shadow, and it haunts me like a spell;  
It's YOURS, O blue-eyed maiden, whom I love so wild  
and well.

"This picture from my memory can never be effaced.  
You've left a mental 'negative,' and cruelly have laced  
My only heart with yours, within that crimson peasant  
waist.

"It grieves me such a story so abruptly to relate;  
I only ask a syllable — your answer is my fate,  
And happiness or sorrow I impatiently await."



There is a stately mansion, built with elegance and  
grace,

Its present situation does not enter in the case:  
It may be Kansas City, or some other noisy place

There is a spacious parlor, but I will not tell you where,  
It 's lighted up with chandeliers into a perfect glare;  
Two persons stand before a crowd that is assembled  
there

And one has eyes of violet, bright as an amethyst,  
And on her shoulders float her chestnut ringlets like a  
mist;

The other, he 's our hero, yes, our photo-graph-u-ist.

A minister is saying something very neat and terse;  
It sounds just like a poem, but it does n't come in  
verse;

It ends (if I remember) with, "for better or for  
worse."

Right well, my photo-graph-u-ist, right well the  
choice you made;

The "negative" is now "preserved," you need not  
be afraid;

You 've gone and got the substance, and the shadow  
will not fade.

## THE KANSAS ATOM

OUT in a Kansas valley an atom was quietly  
musing;

Green the alfalfa meadows and yellow the shale as  
gold;

This was the strange expression the atom was con-  
stantly using:

“Man is the highest office an atom may hope to hold.

“Thrice have I held the office, the goal of exalted  
endeavor,

Regal its wide dominion, its lordship of good and ill,  
Thrice have I lost the office, perchance I have lost it  
forever;

Is it the highest office an atom may hope to fill?

“Idle all other offices, thousands I’ve held through  
the eons,

Soul of a crystal, daffodil, butterfly, albatross, steed;  
Nothing of inspiration or burden of duties and liens;

When we are out we are out, and when we are  
free, are freed.

“Man is the kingly office, so on ever on to regain it,  
    Grades may exist above it as millions exist below;  
Limitless time continues, in which to achieve and  
    retain it;  
I who have always lived must struggle and grope  
    and grow.”

HE AND SHE

WHEN I am dead you 'll find it hard,  
    Said he,  
To ever find another man  
    Like me.

What makes you think, as I suppose  
    You do,  
I'd ever want another man  
    Like you?

## THE FLOPPER

BILL RYE was saying in a store, one day at Baxter Springs,  
That in the future every man would be a-wearing wings.

Of course I took the statement as a hard-shell Baptist might,

And whacked him on the shoulder and observed,  
“You ’re mighty right.”

This happened Friday afternoon: — on Saturday, a week,

I met Bill prancing down the street, a-looking like a freak.

He said: “I want to shake your hand, for you ’re the only man

That ever said a kindly word to me about my plan.

“You said that I was ‘mighty right’; and I am here to say,

I give an exhibition on the public square to-day.

I’m going for to take these wings and climb into the sky,

## The Flopper

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For I have solved the problem, and my name is  
William Rye."

Bill was a combination of despondency and hope;  
At times he grew gregarious, at times he used to  
mope.

There was n't any office that he thought he could n't  
fill;

He looked at each new ism and embraced it with  
a will.

He entered all new parties. He pioneered new  
creeds.

He ran for sheriff, then he flopped to register of  
deeds.

And then he tried for probate judge; but none of it  
would work;

He tried to be a minister, then flopped to postal  
clerk.

I liked Bill's multiplicity; I liked his gall, and — hence  
I went down to the public square and sat upon the  
fence.

And there was Bill upon a box, surrounded by a  
crowd,

A-showing wings, and talking fast, and feeling very  
proud.

I can't repeat the speech he made; in substance it  
was this:

“Oh, here is an occasion that a person should n't  
miss.

I'll show you something finer than you ever yet  
beheld;

For I'm a flying lu-lu, and I've got this thing cor-  
ralled.”

He spread his wings, he mounted up, mile after mile  
the same;

Then all at once he flopped and turned, and head  
first down he came.

So great was his velocity that every one turned pale.  
He went through soil, eight feet of clay, and sixteen  
feet of shale.

A dozen men who knew Bill well, said, when they  
saw him drop,

That William always seemed to try to get a chance  
to flop.

He flopped just once too often. The Baxter people  
went

And filled the hole with cinders, and raised a monu-  
ment.

They carved a line: “Down in the shale reposes  
William Rye —

He did n't have the thing corralled, and hence he got too fly."

And then the *Daily Pioneer* observed, with seeming scoff:

"Soar disappointment was the cause that took the brother off."

## THE LOVIST

[*A True Story*]

LOOK here, you gentle reader,  
A story I must tell,  
About an individual  
Who loved a maiden well.

[He admired and adored her — doted and gloated and floated ; one of his favorite observations was, that her dear image was frescoed on the skylight of his soul.]

He wrote one day a letter,  
And sealed it with a seal,  
To tell the girl how feelingly  
Towards her he did feel.

[This letter partook of the character of a rhythmical communication ; it might have been called an ode, or an apostrophe, or a sonnet, or a piece of versified vacuity, or iambic inanity — but it was n't poetry.]

The young man said : “ It idle is  
For me to ever start  
To paint in one short idyl  
The idol of my heart.”

[The adolescent young maniac called her his ideal, idol, doll, his



fairy, seraph, nymph, grace, and — showed other surface indications of having the old complaint in its most frightful form.]

A carpenter of teeth was he,  
A den-tist, and I'm told  
That in his den he often said  
That teeth were his "best hold."

He exterminated molars and abolished incisors without pain or delay. His motto was, "*Pro bono publico*"—for the public's bones.]

But when the miss the miss-ive read,  
The maiden sentimental,  
She said, said she, "If he gets me,  
It will be acci-dental."

[She told this, in confidence, to a young lady friend, who put on her hood and rushed right off and told the young man, so as to make him feel happy. He asked her to intercede for him. She did so, but the "charmer" simply responded :]

"Who knows, before the orange blossoms wither in my wreath,  
What irony and iron he  
May throw into my teeth?"

[The embassy was a failure. The mutual friend told him all — she not only gave him the "text," but also an elaborate appendix, with notes, index, and glossary.]

And when the young man heard of it,  
He then began to cry;

## Rhymes of Ironquill

He stopped a-drawing of a tooth,  
And went and drew a sigh.

["Why," said he, "this sarcasm, this scornful utterance, this taunt, this sneer, this jibe? I have," said he, "nary — not — no — nothing to live for."]

He then took sick; he tried and tried  
To neutralize, in vain,  
The pain he felt, by wrapping up  
Within a counter-pane.

[It would n't work; he tried to die by an effort of mind, but his mind was too weak — his constitution was stronger than his will. Then he tried whisky, but it never affected him — it never found his brain; it went skirmishing through his system and wore itself out trying to find some ganglionic nodule to operate on. He consequently recovered next day sufficiently to go down town.]

And then he bought a bowie-knife  
With which to end his woes;  
Then went and plunged it in his chest  
[Which was half full of clothes];

Then went and bought a railroad pass,  
And took the evening train  
For climes where golden fortunes are  
"Extracted without pain."

## MELANCHOLY THOUGHTS

### INGALLS VS. VOORHEES

CYCLONE dense,  
Lurid air,  
Wabash hair,  
Hide on fence.

### THE HOMŒOPATHIC DOCTOR

If like cures like,  
Explain to me, my brother,  
How is it doctors  
Cannot cure each other?

### EXPERIENCE

Billy kicked a bull-dog  
Through the picket fence;  
William has less toes on,  
But still he has more sense.

### THE CONVENTION

In Kansas conventions,  
That man, as a rule,

## Rhymes of Ironquill

Who plays the "dark horse"  
Is a cream-colored mule.

## 10-CENT CORN

The laws must be lame,  
Or some one to blame,  
When a bushel will buy  
But one drink of "the same."

## THE POET

There was a poet:  
Through the midnight gloom  
Much oil, much midnight oil,  
Did he consume.

The world beheld  
No product of that toil —  
Alas! the oil consumed  
Was fusel oil.

## TEFFT HOUSE

Says Logroller Jim to Boodle'um Bill,  
"Will you run this fall for the Legislature?"  
Says Boodle'um Bill,  
"I don't think I will,—  
"But I'll go and appeal to their hire nature."

THE WAY OF IT

Says Chuck-a-luck Bill to his vagabond pard,  
“ They say that the way of transgressors is hard.”  
Says Weary Watkins, “ I’ve found it such —  
It’s ’cause the way is traveled so much.”

THE MIND-READER

He could not tell a lie,  
George Washington of old;  
Yet smarter far am I,  
For I can tell a lie  
Soon as I hear it told.

RHYME

A man who was wise and yet frisky  
Desired a new rhyme upon “ whisky ”;  
So he went where ’t was made,  
And he stayed and he stayed,  
And he finally struck it — Paris, Ky.

ALTRUISM

When a one-eyed chap living in Trego  
A-cheating at poker did try,  
A very bad man from Wamego  
Just swiped out his *alter ego* —  
Or rather, his other eye.

## Rhymes of Ironquill

## THE BOOMER

There 's an unauthentic rumor  
That a Kansas City "boomer"  
Went a-diving after pearls;  
As he could n't hold his breath,  
Why, of course, he met his death;  
Now he 's booming other worlds.

## A TRIOLET

Each second a sucker is born  
In the world outside of Kansas;  
We 've got to acknowledge the corn,  
Each second a sucker is born;  
But we laugh the fact to scorn,  
And we don't care where it lands us —  
Each second a sucker is born,  
But he is not born in Kansas.

## LOVELY WOMAN

And as around our manly neck she throws  
Her dimpled arms with artless unconcern,  
And kisses us and asks us to be hern,  
And pats us on the jaw, do you suppose  
That we say "No," grow frightened on the spot,  
And faint away? Well, we should reckon not.  
Young man, come West! — you 've got a lot to learn.

The Romans had a joke  
That sounds peculiar:  
They spoke of lovely woman  
As a “mulier.”

THE WICHITA BOOM

**I**N Wichita I stuck a wad  
Of cash down on the spot;  
For over twenty years since then,  
Like Job, I've cursed my lot.

WAGES OF SIN

**I**F the wages of Sin are death,  
I do not want to begin.  
If I can't get *living* wages,  
I will not work for Sin.

Then again if I went to work,  
And the work I did n't like,  
After I'd passed a pay day,  
I would find I could n't strike.

## ÆSOP'S FABLES

The falsehoods of the immortal Æsop bear such an appearance of innocence and truth that, as examples, they have been handed down from antiquity, undimmed by suspicion and unshaken by criticism.

To the young and rising youth, whom tender years for future efforts are shaping, who are yet to go to the legislature, to edit newspapers, run for office, and hold positions of perquisites and emoluments—more especially those who are to be the sole hope for candidates in the future—a study of Æsop's successful efforts is invaluable. Having had to gain experience from conversations with candidates, campaign speeches, and telegrams, the translator can imagine how gladly HE would have hailed these models of successful ability, in former years.

The misstatements and mendacity of Æsop have never been surpassed; as such they are here translated for the scholars of the Paint Creek school, and thrown like bread upon the angry billows of the Yellow Paint.—TRANSLATOR.

### PERSIMMONS

[*Fable No. 1*]

ONCE a fox, upon the sly,  
Some persimmons did behold,  
So he got a pole and poled;



But he gave up with a sigh,  
And acknowledged his mistake —  
The persimmons would n't rake.

MORAL

Then in sorrow he did say,  
As he slowly walked away,  
Fruit of that kind will elude  
All our efforts, I am told,  
If the pole with which it's poled  
Has n't got the longitude.

AGRICOLA ET FILIUS

[*Fable No. 2*]

Brown he runs a farm and ranch  
By the billows of Lath Branch,  
And he had a son named Jim,  
Who had never learned to swim;  
And one Sunday Jim was found  
Down in Lath Branch partly drowned.  
But old Brown knew what to do;  
For he somewhere cut a limb,  
And he somehow stayed with Jim,  
And he somewhat brought him to.

## MORAL

Do not run a farm and ranch  
By the billows of Lath Branch.  
Men named Brown with boys named Jim  
Ought to teach their boys to swim.  
Boys named Jim most always drown  
If their other name is Brown.

## ANGUIS ET ANGUISH

[*Fable No. 3*]

Old man Snyder found a snake,  
Frozen stiffer than a stake,  
And he tucked it in his breast,  
And he buttoned up his vest.  
When the saurian became thawed,  
Mr. Snyder became chawed,  
And in one unbroken stream  
He proceeded to blaspheme,  
And eradicate the plug  
From a little, old brown jug.  
  
Then he took a modest “snort,”  
Of, perhaps, about a quart,  
And conversed as if he — well —  
Had profanity to sell.

Year by year, with all his might,  
     Snyder tried to cure that bite,  
 But he did n't have the heft;  
     So one day, beside the jug,  
     He, while heaving at the plug,  
 Caught the jim-james and got left.

MORAL

Frozen saurians are safer;  
     And, it's bitterer than borax  
     To be gnawed about the thorax,  
 One's humanity to pay for.

THE LIGHTNING-BUG AND THE SKEETER

[*Fable No. 4*]

Once a lightning-bug did fly  
     With a skeeter down the street,  
 One hot evening in July.  
     And these words he did repeat:  
 "See me shine! see me shine!"  
 But the skeeter gave no sign  
 Of ambition or design,  
     And these words he did repeat:  
 "None in mine! none in mine!"  
  
 Then an urchin, quick as scat,  
     With an agitated face

## Rhymes of Ironquill

And an antiquated hat,  
 To the lightning-bug gave chase,  
 Then the skeeter joined the race;  
 Looked the ragged urchin o'er;  
 Picked an unprotected place,  
 And he helped himself to gore.

## DOCET

Life is somewhat Janus-faced:  
 Look the situation o'er,  
 Join the throng, and go for gore,  
 Or — be brilliant and get chased.

## PAVO

[*Fable No. 5*]

Said a peacock unto Juno,  
 “What 's the reason I can't sing?  
 See! a tail I can unfold  
 That is gorgeous to behold.  
 Tell me, tell me, if you do know,  
 What 's the reason I can't sing,  
 When I'm such a gorgeous thing?”

Juno, answering the bird,  
 Half in earnest, half in fun,  
 Said “Injustice would be done

If all favors were conferred,  
Of the many, upon one."

MORAL

Notwithstanding what we wish  
In this world of fact and fate,  
Some must fish and some dig bait —  
Just a few of us can fish.

See that orphan boy at work,  
Working early, working late?  
He is learning how to wait;  
He is learning not to shirk.

Then observe the rich man's son,  
Aping style and making bets —  
Smoking idle cigarettes,  
Talking chaff and having fun.

Years that orphan boy will wait;  
Then he'll take that rich man's son  
And will terminate that fun,  
And will set him digging bait.

Then the rich man's son will wish,  
As the iron days go by,  
And the tears come in his eye,  
That he had a chance to fish

## Rhymes of Ironquill

But his wish will come too late;  
For the orphan, who meanwhile  
Does the fishing, smiles a smile,  
And compels him to dig bait.

## THE AXE-I-DENT

[*Fable No. 6*]

Day by day was Thomas seen  
On the head of Wolverine,  
And the old primeval rung  
As his five-pound axe he slung;  
And he worked with smile and song,  
Making "wood-cuts" all day long.  
But the wood grew hard to chip,  
So he went to grind his axe;  
But his care becoming lax,  
Something ran afoul the crank,  
And it gave the axe a yank,  
And the helve it gave a flip,  
And it reached him on the lip;  
Then the unreflecting youth  
Swallowed, thoughtlessly, a tooth,  
And he sort of lost his grip.

To the doctor Thomas goes,  
And discourses all his woes,  
Worldly, physical, and mental;

But the doctor shook his head,  
And he very gravely said:  
“ You have got a *fell* disease,  
For in axe-i-dents like these  
Pains are always inside-dental.”

SEQUEL

And he made a lot of pills  
Out of 3-x Graham flour,  
Saying, “ Take one every hour:  
They will cure you of your ills.”

MORAL

Any man will lose his grip  
If he does n't feel inclined,  
When he has an “ axe to grind,”  
To be careful of his “ lip.”

THE INVIDIOUS CANINE

[*Fable No. 7*]

O'er the rough and rocky ridge,  
Leading downward with a path  
To the brittle little bridge  
That is hung across the Lath,  
Came a large, inclement bull-dog, full of  
wrath;

## Rhymes of Ironquill

But the canine never tarried —  
In his mouth he something carried :  
Like a miner, wide awake,  
He had been and raised a steak.

Crossing on the bridge, his glance,  
To the water thrown by chance,  
Saw another dog and meat  
In precipitate retreat ;  
Then his onward course he slants,  
And attempts to head them off —  
And his corpus now conceals  
Half a barrellful of eels.

## MORAL

No one merchant yet was made  
Who could gobble all the trade.  
Painfully misfortune pelts  
Those who reach for some one else ;  
No one bull-dog yet could eat  
Every other bull-dog's meat.  
If you have a good-sized bone,  
Let the other dog alone.

## LIMBURGER

[*Fable No. 8*]

On a tree there sat a crow,  
In his bill a chunk of cheese ;



On the ground, a fox below  
Said, "Some music, if you please.  
You are beautiful of wing,  
And I bet that *you* can sing."

Cheered by flattery, the crow  
Sang, and dropped the cheese below;  
Then the cunning fox did freeze  
To that fallen chunk of cheese,  
And he calmly lugged it off,  
And he scoffed the song with scoff.

## MORAL

When they pat you on the back,  
When they say that you 're the one,  
When they say they 're on the track,  
And "have been obliged to run";  
When their compliments denote  
They are going for your vote,  
You can do just as you please.  
But — you 'd better watch your cheese.

## THE SWELL

[*Fable No. 9*]

On the walk a hat did lie,  
And a gallus chap sailed by,

## Rhymes of Ironquill

And he cut a lively swell —  
He was clerk in a hotel;

So, he gave that hat a kick,  
And he came across a brick —  
Now upon a crutch he goes,  
Minus half a pound of toes.

## MORAL

When you see a person thrown  
By misfortune or by vice,  
Help him thrice or seven times thrice;  
Help him up or let alone.  
If you give the man a kick  
You may stumble on a brick,  
Or a stone.

Fate is liable to frown,  
And the best of us go down;  
And in just a little while  
She is liable to smile.  
And the bad luck and the vice  
Seem to scatter in a trice,  
And to hunt their holes like mice.  
And the man you tried to kick  
Now has changed into a brick.

THE LIFE-INSURANCE AGENT AND THE POST AUGER

[*Fable No. 10*]

Very skillfully and fast,  
 Boring post-holes in the soil,  
 Worked an honest son of toil;  
 An insurance agent passed,  
 Saying, "Such a 'perfect bore'  
 I have never seen before."  
 Then he sort of caught his breath,  
 And he talked that man to death.

MORAL

Strange it is, somehow or other  
 We are bound to make a fuss,  
 When we notice in another  
 Vices that belong to us.

THE COWCATCHER

[*Fable No. 11*]

Cast your eagle eye on me —  
 Leaders there must always be.  
 I have such a massive brain,  
 I can stand the tug and strain.  
 See the engine and the train  
 As they meekly follow me.  
 Leaders there must always be.

It's a part of nature's plan  
That I occupy the van.  
    Born to rule, and born to lead,  
    Born to flourish and precede,  
    The momentum and the speed  
Of the engine and the train  
Are the products of my brain.

## MORAL

Those the world has pushed ahead  
Thought they pulled the world they led.  
    They were either fast or slow,  
    As the world would have them go;  
    But they never seemed to know  
That behind them came the force  
That controlled their speed and course.

## NANKEEN

[*Fable No. 12*]

Through the light-long summer day  
Sam the game of "draw" did play;  
    Through the summer Sammy laughed,  
    Sang, and played the game of "draft."  
Gay and jolly and serene —  
With his breeches of nankeen.

Through the doleful winter days  
 Still at poker Sammy plays;  
     Gone his songs, and smiles so bland;  
     He is waiting for a hand;  
 And the winter skies are chill —  
 And he wears that nankeen still.

MORAL

Draft and nankeen go together  
 Very well in summer weather,  
     But when winter-time sets in  
     Draft and nankeen get too thin.

CAPERS ET CAPER

[*Fable No. 13*]

From a chimney on the roof  
 Of the Wilder House hotel,  
 Did a William goat espy  
 An old army mule go by;  
     Spied those vast and sail-like ears —  
     And he jeered the mule with jeers.

Then the mule he made a tack,  
     Brought his jib 'round to the wind.  
 Main and mizzen ears a-back,

## Rhymes of Ironquill

And his starboard eye he skinned;  
Then he reached that goat a hoof  
Which dismissed him from the roof.

## SOLILOQUY

Morals two this tale will teach:  
First, There is n't any rule  
That will cipher out the reach  
Of an ancient army mule;  
Second, There are many dangers  
In mis-estimating strangers.

## SUCKER AND SALAMANDER

## AN AQUARIUM STORY

[*Fable No. 14*]

In an ornamental jar,  
Filled with blazing, red-hot tar,  
Did a salamander swim;  
In a thousand jolly ways  
He disported in the blaze —  
It was fun alive for *him*.

With a less display of rank,  
Swam a sucker in a tank,  
And unto himself he said:  
“Would that I were in his place,

Swimming in that blazing vase,  
And that he were in my stead."

An attendant heard the speech,  
And he changed them each with each.  
Then the salamander sank  
To the bottom of the tank,  
In inanimate repose;  
While the sucker curled and died,  
Looking just as peeled and fried  
As a Democratic nose.

## MORAL

Souls of fire may dare the fire,  
May aspire  
To rule the fire;  
But the element consumes  
Any SUCKER who presumes.

## ZEPHYR .

[*Fable No. 15*]

Once a Kansas zephyr strayed  
Where a brass-eyed bird pup played,  
And that foolish canine bayed  
At that zephyr, in a gay,  
Semi-idiotic way.  
Then that zephyr, in about

## Rhymes of Ironquill

Half a jiffy, took that pup,  
 Tipped him over, wrong side up;  
 Then it turned him wrong side out.  
 And it calmly journeyed thence,  
 With a barn and string of fence.

## MORAL

When communities turn loose  
 Social forces that produce  
     The disorders of a gale,  
 Act upon the well-known law:  
 Face the breeze, but close your jaw.  
     It's a rule that will not fail:  
 If you bay it, in a gay,  
 Self-sufficient sort of way,  
     It will land you, without doubt,  
     Upside down and wrong side out

## THE UNSOCIABLE MILESTONES

·[*Fable No. 16*]

Strung along a highway stood  
 Twenty milestones, made of wood,  
     Undisturbed by storm or weather;  
 And the jokers said their say,  
 As they passed along the way:  
 "How unsociable are they —  
     Milestones never get together."



But the milestones cared not whether  
 It were worst or it were best —  
 Undisturbed by jeer or jest,  
 Two were never seen together.  
 Duty made them what they were,  
 And they did not care to stir.

MORAL

Men there are whose work, whose place  
 Is, like milestones, to mark out  
 Both the distance and the route;  
 Both the destiny and way,  
 In the progress of the race.  
 If they mingle with the throng  
 That moves thoughtlessly along,  
 Then their duty they betray.  
 Lonesome, very lonesome, they;  
 But, unmoved by hope or fear,  
 Undisturbed by jest or jeer,  
 There their duty — and they stay.

THE CANINE AND THE MISSOURI-PACIFIC

[*Fable No. 17*]

Once a farm became infested  
 With a horde of railway trains,  
 And an active double-breasted  
 Yellow canine took the pains

To run out both night and day,—  
Bark and scare the trains away.

When he heard the sound encroaching  
He would waken up and growl;  
When he saw the train approaching  
He would run at it and howl;  
Then without the least delay  
Chase it down the right-of-way.  
Then he 'd go back home and say  
With a sense of deep alarm:  
Well,—they almost got the farm.  
*This fabula docet.*

Oft the statesman and the saint  
Think they 're doing good, but ain't.

## NEOPHYTE

[*Fable No. 18*]

Last night a zealous Irishman in town,  
Meeting a Jew, squared off and knocked him down.

And when the Jew inquired of such behavior,  
Michael replied: "Bedad, ye kilt me Saviour."

The Jew replied: "Mine friend, it is not so;  
That happened nineteen centuries ago."

Mike simply said: "Bedad, ye may be right,  
But then I only heard of it last night."

And striking out reckless again and loose  
Became a martyr—in the calaboose.

## MORAL

Theology and ignorance combined  
Make bigotry, and that sets all men blind.  
And streams of ruin from this common source  
Have swept the world with devastating force.

## SAM RADGES AND THE BIRD

THEN Samuel bought a diamond which was very  
large and clear,  
It had a big gold corkscrew extending to the rear;  
He screwed it in his shirt-front, and people they  
did say,  
That headlight on the Santa Fé at night looks mighty  
gay.  
Sam Radges was a Britisher, his brogue was rare and  
rich,  
And sometimes he did drop an "H," but never dropped  
a stitch;  
He went into the Civil War, and helped us fight it  
through,  
He charged on batteries and things as all old soldiers  
do.  
And then he struck Topeka, and then he writ a  
book,  
Of which a big edition we all had to take, and took.\*  
We went and bought that book of his, in companies  
and squads,

\* City Directory.

And Samuel he looked cheerfully, and raked down  
cash in wads.

Thus Sam became an author, the biggest in the  
pile,

And when it came to cash results he had us skinned  
a mile;

Then Samuel bought a diamond which was very large  
and clear,

And it had a big gold corkscrew which extended to  
the rear.

One day a circus came to town and out the bugles  
blurt;

It almost tickled Sam to death, like a new army  
shirt.

He went and prowled among the bears, the cats and  
kangaroos,

The elephants, the camels, and the Sunday morning  
gnus.

He fed the monkeys peanuts, and he fed the zebras  
gum,

But little did he think of things that were about to  
come.

How often in this world of ours when all is gay and  
clear

Big chunks of trouble saturate the ambient atmos-  
phere.

There was a big blue ostrich standing tethered to a  
post,

Its look was an impertinence, its visage was a  
boast;

It eyed the dusty maudlin crowd, it wore a gaze of  
sneer,

And waited patiently about till Rades did ap-  
pear.

The lofty ostrich gazed at Sam, and then with move  
expert,

It nipped the dazzling dornick from the bosom of Sam's  
shirt.

Scarce had his polished negligée received that froward  
peck,

Sam had the ornithology, with both hands, by the  
neck,

For Sam had brought his nerve along as well as fifty  
cents,

And when he had that nerve along his conduct was  
intense.

I cannot stop here to describe the contest that en-  
sued;

The people formed a ring and watched the outcome  
of the feud.

When Samuel's boot-heels split the air he'd say, as  
up he rose,

"Your gizzard never 'll get it,"—and other threats  
like those.

Upon that neck with two strong hands he held with  
deadly squeeze

And round and round he went as if performing the  
trapeze.

The bird it fought most furious and did its level  
best;

At last it got its hind leg in the arm-hole of Sam's  
vest.

Then up and down and sideways went Ridges short  
of breath,

But Samuel simply skinned the cat and held on like  
grim death.

The bird still fought and struggled on, but Sam in  
spite of that

Just simply skinned the feline, like a polished acrobat.

He never lost his language, and he never lost his  
grip,

And thro' his rounds, and ups and downs, firm was  
his upper lip.

At last the fowl fell in collapse and laid him down to  
rest;

It feebly pulled its hind leg from the arm-hole of Sam's  
vest;

Then over sideways fell the bird like a big sack of  
flour,

The bird had had no oxygen for over half an hour.

Then Sam pulled out his pocket knife and, opening the neck,

He rescued his geology, and was once more on deck.

And then, with never gloat of pride nor look of fear or hurt,

He took that ace of diamonds and re-screwed it in his shirt.

And then, as if his program had neither pause nor hitch,

He sought the Ananias Club and beat Bill Webb at pitch.

Go, stranger, down to Lawrence, the Athens of our State,

Go, stranger, climb that craggy hill, it is the bluff of fate.

Go, stranger, ask Professor Dyche and say you want to see

The famous Rades ostrich—he'll point it out with glee.

It stands there in the museum, with look of stately sneer,

As if it waited patiently for Rades to appear.



IN THE SUPREME COURT, STATE OF  
KANSAS

---

GEORGE LEWIS, *Appellant*,

*v.s.*

STATE OF KANSAS, *Appellee*.

---

*Appeal from Atchison County*

---

SYLLABUS

*Law — paw ; guilt — will .* When upon thy frame the law — places  
its majestic paw — though in innocence or guilt — thou art then  
required to wilt.

STATEMENT OF CASE, BY REPORTER

THIS defendant, while at large,  
Was arrested on a charge  
Of burglarious intent,  
And direct to jail he went.  
But he somehow felt misused,  
And through prison walls he oozed,  
And in some unheard-of shape  
He effected his escape.

Mark you now !—again the law  
On defendant placed its paw,  
Like a hand of iron mail,  
And resocked him into jail;  
Which said jail, while so corralled,  
He by sock-age tenure held.

Then the court met, and they tried  
Lewis up and down each side,  
On the good, old-fashioned plan;  
But the jury cleared the man

Now, *you* think that this strange case  
Ends at just about this place.  
*Nay, not so.* Again the law  
On defendant placed its paw —  
This time takes him 'round the cape  
For effecting an escape;  
He, unable to give bail,  
Goes reluctantly to jail.

Lewis, tried for this last act,  
Makes a special plea of fact:  
“Wrongly did they me arrest,  
As my trial did attest;  
And while rightfully at large,  
Taken on a wrongful charge,

I took back from them what they  
From me wrongly took away."

When this special plea was heard,  
Thereupon THE STATE demurred.  
The defendant then was pained  
    When the court was heard to say,  
    In a cold, impassive way,  
"The demurrer is sustained."

Back to jail did Lewis go;  
    But, as liberty is dear,  
    He appeals, and now is here  
To reverse the court below.  
    The opinion will contain  
    All the statements that remain.

ARGUMENT AND BRIEF OF APPELLANT

"As a matter, sir, of fact,  
Who was injured by our act —  
Any property or man?  
Point it out, sir, if you can.  
Can you seize us, when at large,  
On a baseless, trumped-up charge;  
And, if we escape, then say  
It is *crime* to get away —  
When we rightfully regained  
What was wrongfully obtained?

“ Please-the-court-sir, what is crime ?  
 What is right, and what is wrong ?  
 Is our freedom but a song,  
 Or the subject of a rhyme ? ”

ARGUMENT AND BRIEF OF THE ATTORNEY FOR THE  
 STATE

“ When THE STATE, that is to say,  
 WE, take liberty away —  
 When the padlock and the hasp  
 Leave one helpless in our grasp,  
 It's unlawful then that he  
 Even *dreams* of liberty;  
 Wicked dreams that may in time  
 Grow and ripen into *crime* —  
 Crime of dark and damning shape;  
 Then if he perchance escape,  
 Evermore remorse will roll  
 O'er his shattered, sin-sick soul.

“ Please-the-court-sir, how can we  
 Manage people who get free ? ”

REPLY OF APPELLANT

“ Please-the-court-sir, if it 's *sin*,  
 Where does *turpitude* begin ? ”

PER CURIAM (OPINION OF THE COURT)

“We — don’t — make — law; we are bound  
To interpret it as found.

“The defendant broke away;  
When arrested he should stay.  
This appeal can’t be maintained,  
For the record does not show  
Error in the court below,  
And we nothing can infer.  
Let the judgment be sustained;  
All the justices concur.”

[*Note by the Reporter*]

Of the sheriff, rise and sing:  
“Glory to our earthly king!”

(19 Kas. 266)

## AN AGREED STATEMENT OF FACTS

AS TO THE ADMISSION OF MR. HIC JONES TO THE PAINT  
CREEK BAR, KANSAS

JONES was young and unassuming, but the shrewd  
observer saw

Something that appeared abnormal in the structure of  
his jaw.

When the court convened, old Snipe-'em, with a voice  
like a guitar,

Offered Jones's application for admission to the bar.

Then the court looked wise and owly, and in slow,  
judicial tones

Ordered Snipe-'em, Brown, and Spot-'em first to  
analyze young Jones;

Saying, "Gentlemen, be thorough; at the opening of  
the court

We will skip the motion docket, and consider your  
report."

Sheriff Grabb then showed the party to the "ante"-  
room — up-stairs,

Where a table stacked with gun-wads had been check-  
mated with chairs.

It was four o'clock precisely; Spot-'em gently turned  
the key,  
Saying, "Frauds, I 'll act as banker — waltz your  
ducats up to me."

The analysis proceeded up to twelve or thereabout,  
When the stock of ardent spirits unexpectedly gave  
out.

Spot-'em wrote a note to Julius, saying, "Julius, if  
you please,

Send us up a red-hot lunch for four; we 're raking  
down for threes."

And an order for *frumenti* and cigars was sent by  
Brown,

Drawn on Thomas, of the "Wilder," chief nose-artist  
of the town.

The committee stopped for supper, readjusted all their  
loans,

And continued with fresh vigor their researches for  
young Jones.

Just about this time, "the district clerk of the afore-  
said court "

By some unknown coincidence dropped in to see the  
sport.

Having hefted the *frumenti*, he did cheerfully reply  
To their bland interrogations in regard to "chicken-pie."

Unpaid fees in Spot-'em's cow case were discounted  
then by Brown,  
Which the clerk took out in gun-wads, most of which  
young Jones raked down.

At the hour of three precisely, after four successful  
raids,  
Spot-'em raked down Snipe-'em's shirt studs on a  
hand composed of spades;  
Snipe-'em took a dose of tonic and reluctantly resigned,  
While the clerk, with sad bravado, went a collar-  
button blind.

Hour by hour the game continued; Jones came in on  
every draw,  
But no syllable proceeded from that strange, abnormal  
jaw.

On a bench snoozed Snipe-'em, sadly, in the corner of  
the room,  
While the smoked-up coal-oil chimney cast a deep,  
sepulchral gloom:  
And at times his troubled slumbering evoked uncon-  
scious moans,  
As if saying, "It is difficult — this analyzing Jones."

At last the time at which the court should reassemble  
came;



it did not seem to influence the progress of the game;  
They had not yet made up their minds concerning  
their report.

And here we leave them briefly while we look in on  
the court.

. . . . .

A *pro tem.* judge was on the bench; two members of  
the bar  
Assaulted twelve one-gallows men with words of  
legal war.

The way was this: It seems that Smith, in opening  
his case,

Had told the jury carelessly, as of some time or place,  
That he had seen a real, dead mule; his language was  
not pat —

Of course nobody ever saw a mule as dead as  
that.

But still Smith was excusable — the heat of a debate  
May lead a man unconsciously to slightly overstate.  
Zeal for a client's lawsuit — the more if it be weak —  
May make a lawyer's language go impalpably oblique.  
But still, upon the other hand, an orator, forsooth,  
Should try and keep his statements within gunshot of  
the truth;

And Smith was very careless in observance of the rule  
To make so rash a statement in regard to any mule.

Its absurdness never struck him, for he never stopped  
to think;

All at once he dropped upon it when he saw a juror  
wink.

Now if Smith had been sagacious, he immediately then  
Would have modified that statement to those twelve  
one-gallows men —

Would have intimated mildly that it might have been  
a horse,

But he did n't; conscience smote him, and, he sank  
down with remorse —

Folded up as folds a primrose when the gates of day  
are shut;

Folded up as folds a jack-knife when a chaw of plug  
is cut.

The greater our experience the more we surely find  
Remarks should be adaptable unto the hearer's mind.  
Twelve preachers might have took it in, but Smith  
could never fool

Twelve citizens of Turkey Creek with reference to the  
mule.

Then up rose lawyer Soak-'em; his lips were close  
compressed,

His left hand gripped his coat-tail, his right was on  
his breast;

He gazed on the "palladium"; his look was stern  
and high —

In thunder tones he emphasized Smith's statement as  
a lie;

And then, in terms that Soak-'em took occasion to  
adorn,

He branded him — denounced him — held him up to  
public scorn,

Pointed his finger at him, and, in allegoric sense,  
He peeled Smith's epidermis off and hung it on the  
fence.

Then in a few pathetic words he made allusion to  
The immortality of mules, which every juror knew.  
The jury cheered the diction that in such profusion  
came,

And Smith — he writhed in agony of hopeless grief  
and shame.

The jury then were eulogized appropriately neat —  
Of course they found for Soak-'em without rising from  
their seat.

But how they reached the merits of the case is not so  
clear,

For the action they were trying was replevin for a  
steer.

And then the restless, coatless, but appreciative crowd  
Gave Smith "the great, big horse-laugh," and he sat  
there cold and cowed.

. . . . .

Hereupon came Brown and Spot-'em, Jones and Snipe-  
'em in the rear,

Arm in arm, each with his necktie dangling down  
below his ear;

Each one made a short, spasmodic pull upon his rum-  
pled vest,

And, fronting up before the judge, the whole platoon  
right-dressed.

“Hic — your honor,” said old Snipe-'em with a voice  
diffused, yet sweet,

“Hic — we 've ma' der 'zamination mor' n'er usual  
complete;

We 've jus' gone — hic — thro' er can'idate; 's pro-  
ficiency is fair.”

“Hic — you bet,” said Brown, who eyed the court  
with mild and fishy glare.

“Went ri' through—hic—Jones,” said Snipe-'em; “he  
z'all ri'—hic — on 'er law;

He can draw 'er chattel mortgage — or three aces ever'  
draw;

'Z got all Spot-'em's tex'-books and reports; mine,  
too — hic — hain't he, Brown?

Young — hic — Jones has got 'er principal law lib'ry  
now in town.

"'Z got 'er daisy moral character — Jones squarer 'an  
 a string;  
 Raised old Spot-'em seventeen dollars, an' he did n't  
 have a thing;  
 'Z by all means admit — hic — Jones 'er bar; 'ose book  
 mus' stay in town;  
 Hic — old Spot 's too full for utterance." "Zas so,"  
 responded Brown.

"Clerk, swear Hic Jones," old *pro tem.* said, in lan-  
 guage gruff and quick.

(The court supposed that Jones's antecedent name  
 was "Hic.")

Then the clerk said somewhat vaguely, "You do  
 swear — hic — from 'is date,

You will solem'ny support 'er conistution of 'er  
 State;

Be 'er lawyer of 'er bar from 'is date — hic — forthly  
 hence.

[Hold up 'er han'] — all ri' — hic — bob — so help you  
 — fifty cents."

Then the judge gave Jones a chromo; Jones received  
 it with delight,

And the whole platoon meandered, with a right flank  
 — hic — file right.

So delighted was a juror that the shingle-nail was bust

That did duty as a button where the juror's jeans  
were trussed;

But the cardiac formation of young Smith was turned  
to stone—

Ah! how lurid Jones's future, and how dismal was  
his own!

. . . . .

Years have passed, and Smith and Spot-'em have  
exuded from the State;

Brown and Soak-'em work for Findlay, in the coal  
bank, lifting slate;

Snipe-'em got in debt to every one, but Snipe-'em  
never frets—

They made him go to Congress so that he could pay  
his debts.

Jones is everywhere considered as a bright, peculiar  
star;

He's got one case they say will make his fortune at  
the bar:

Ejectment for a dam-site on the shores of Yellow  
Paint—

On that boulder-drifted shore,

Where the angry billows roar,

And the women loudly snore, whether they're asleep  
or ain't.

He has written and delivers an exceedingly fine  
lecture

On "Proceedings in Tribunals of Penultimate Con-  
jecture";

And this very able thesis, though epitomized and  
short,

Contains the law for all the courts of *dernier* last  
resort.

Let us hope that Jones's future, so auspiciously begun,  
May, like Snipe-'em's outlawed due-bills, have suffi-  
cient time to run.

## A CORN POEM

*[Delivered at Centennial 4th of July]*

OUR President and Governor have said,  
In proclamations which you all have read,  
That we the record of the hundred years,  
Its hopes, its histories, its pioneers,  
Should hear in public; wishing to obey,  
We meet together on the present day.

As local annals and such themes as those  
Are more attractive when addressed in prose,  
And as the dense statistics of the times  
Are somewhat irreducible to rhymes,  
We leave those subjects to their proper charge,  
And take the liberty to roam at large.

There have been men who into verse complete  
Could rhyme a township map or tax receipt;  
But no such man is here. Ourself to-day  
Must treat of subjects in a general way.  
While present prices rule on steers and grain,  
Divine, first-class emotion can't sustain.



At such low figures, any Kansas muse  
All pyrotechnic efforts must refuse;  
Dates, names, statistics, and such themes as those  
Must go remanded to the realms of prose;  
So here a humble poem we commence,  
Equivalent to corn at twenty cents.

Nate Price of Troy, at Leavenworth last June,  
Told of a backwoods Arkansaw saloon:  
Two gay "commercial tourists," somewhat dry,  
Stepped in for drinks as they were passing by.  
Says one: "Some lemon in my tumbler squeeze."  
The other says: "Some sugar, if you please."  
Each got a pistol pointed at his head —  
"You'll take her straight," the bar-keep gravely said.  
The gay commercial tourists bowed to fate,  
And quickly took their drinks and exits straight.

The humble poem that we here begin  
Has got no lemon and no sugar in.  
It's as it is, and we beg leave to state,  
On this "auspicious day" you'll take it straight.

---

My theme to-day is History — not the shelf  
Whereon she sets her idols, but herself.  
If I examine History aright,

I read of one long and unbroken fight —  
One thrilling drama; every scene and act  
Contains the record of a city sacked.  
From time to time the curtain drops amain  
On cities blazing, with defenders slain;

Yet, ere their ashes have had time to cool,  
They start again to opulence and rule.  
To what strange power, so vitalized and strong,  
Do these recurrent energies belong?  
Whence come the latent forces that re-rear,  
From ash and wave, the palace and the pier?

No answer back the old historian brings;  
His tale is but of battles and of kings.  
His prose and verse were written to proclaim  
Some useless battle, or some kingly name —  
No honor given to the brains or toil  
That pluck the wealth from mountain, sea, and soil.  
They leave that out — but throw distinguished light  
Upon the least minutiae of a fight.  
They name the leaders, and each word they said;  
The hour, the spot, some phalanx charged, or fled;  
The time and place some squadron came in view,  
And what it did, or what it failed to do;  
And then because some something was not done,  
This king, or that, is whipped and has to run.

Then come three cheers for the successful king,  
And bugles *peel* — like slippery elms in spring.

Since Cecrops landed on the Grecian shore,  
Brought on a stock — started a country store —  
Picked out a site by some prophetic guess,  
And boomed old Athens to a grand success,  
The human mind has always sought renown  
In founding States, or building up a town.  
Full four and thirty centuries have passed  
Since enterprising Cecrops breathed his last,  
And many cities since that early day  
Have grown up grandly, and have passed away;  
Yet ancient chroniclers forget to state  
What built the cities, and what made them great.  
Of those of whom the olden stories sing,  
The greatest hero is the unknown king.  
Of him of whom old history gives no clew —  
This Unknown King — declare I unto you.

Who framed the social structure? paid the bill?  
Who organized its labor and its skill?  
Who built the ships and wharves? Who wove the  
sail?  
Who fed the armies? and who forged their mail?  
No answer ancient history gives back.  
These unknown kings no wealthy cities sack;

And history, with proud, patrician frown,  
Ignores a power that never burned a town.  
Read of the growth of States, and you will find  
Their opulence to some great king assigned;  
And being king, by accident or force,  
He gets the credit, as a thing of course.  
Now, when the truth is told, it shows two things:  
First, States are rich and great in spite of kings;  
And next, that nations opulent are made  
By neither kings nor battles, but by trade.

Old Business is the monarch. He rules both  
The opulence of nations and their growth.  
He, whom we call endearingly "Old Biz,"—  
He does the work, the credit all is *his*.  
He builds their cities and he paves their streets,  
He feeds their armies and equips their fleets.  
Kings are his puppets, and *his* arm alone  
Contains the muscle that can prop a throne;  
Soon would the gilded fabric tumble down  
Were Business not the regent of the crown.

Old History, stand up. We wish to ask  
Why you so meanly have performed your task.  
Under your arm you have a showy book,  
In which we now insist that we may look;  
We 'd like to see what 's in that gilt-edged tome.

Say, did Old Business ever reign in Rome?  
You say he did n't? Well, may we inquire  
If the aforesaid Business reigned at Tyre?  
"Don't b'lieve he did"? Well, look the index  
    through,  
And see if he is mentioned *once* by you.  
"Can't find his name"? Well, that is somewhat  
    queer.  
Say, of Old Business did you ever hear?

You never did? Well, I 'm inclined to think  
Pens full of pigs, and not pens full of ink,  
Should be the object of your future skill,  
And that your book should feed the paper mill.  
O History! the language may be broad,  
But we must here impeach you as a fraud.

There is a cheerful story that is told  
About a great Egyptian king of old;  
He thought to build a lighthouse on an isle  
That fronted on the delta of the Nile.  
He thought to take the money of the State,  
Build something big, and be forever great.  
He called for architects, selected one,  
And turned him over treasure by the ton.  
Upon an isle, o'er which the breakers curled,  
Grew up the second wonder of the world;

Far o'er the land and distant ocean viewed,  
Five hundred feet in snow-white marble hewed;  
And on its summit watch-fires, day and night,  
Directed shipping with a constant light —  
The tower of Pharos, capped with massive ledge,  
Bearing the monarch's name upon the edge,  
And o'er the sea for many a league marine  
The royal name of Ptolemy was seen.  
The architect, unhonored and unknown,  
Died, leaving all the credit to the throne;  
The man whose splendid genius planned and wrought  
Was not considered worthy of a thought.  
Then died the king, and people one by one  
Spoke of the tower as something *he* had done.

There stands the lighthouse, but each new decade  
Beholds the king's inscription slowly fade.  
It dimmer grows, until it fades from sight,  
And then a new inscription comes to light;  
The architect asserts *his* rightful claim —  
Where stood the king's, now stands the builder's  
name.

The king's name, wrought in stucco-work and paint,  
Each year beheld grow dimmer and more faint:  
Filled with cement, this sentence had been hid:  
“For mariners. By Sos-tra-tos, of Cnid.”  
The rugged, massive letters, carved in Greek,

The builder and his residence bespeak,  
While in the dust, upon the sea and shore,  
The kingly name goes scattered evermore.

Great States, whose splendid ruins scattered lie,  
Have stood like wonders in the days gone by;  
And every State, before it met decay,  
Has ruled the world on some eventful day —  
Has taken rule by virtue of its sons.  
Through every State the thread of empire runs;  
The ancient nations and the ancient creeds  
Are strung on *empire* like a row of beads;  
And on the ruins that in silence sleep  
The name of Business has been graven deep.

And he has made them be what they have been;  
Has made them win because they need must win.  
And he the architect, who planned and wrought,  
Building no better than he knew and thought —  
And over all, in stucco-work and paint,  
The names of kings are feebly seen and faint.

The now aggressive spirit of the age  
Adds to old History an unwritten page;  
Chips off the paint and plaster, and anew  
Restores the name of Business to our view.

Vain were the effort, in this modern age,  
To tell when Business came upon the stage;  
First when and where he hung his shingle out,  
Is, like a jury trial, full of doubt.  
The first important European town,  
In point of time and subsequent renown,  
Was Athens; and when founded, facts attest  
That zeal and enterprise were tending west.  
If, for a point of time to fix upon,  
We take the era of King Solomon,  
We find that restless movement of the race  
Toward the western world is taking place;  
The emigration has become so vast,  
With buccaneers the seas are swarming fast;  
Athens grows large, and public spirit calls  
For graded streets and more extensive walls;  
Then Greece fills up, until the moving host  
Is banked upon the Adriatic coast.  
The sea but for a moment stops the tide;  
Brundusium springs from the Italian side.  
Then west by north, in undiminished size,  
The volume of the emigration plies;  
Back o'er the line, to deep Brundusium's bay,  
Rome builds and paves the world-wide Appian Way.  
Checked by the western sea, the restless tide  
Builds up a chain of cities, side by side.  
Then, seeking vent on scarce divergent lines,



Boils through the foot-hills of the Apennines,  
Builds Florence, Milan, Genoa, Turin,  
Halts at the Alps, but halts to re-begin;  
Then, like a pent-up torrent, the advance  
Pours through the Alps and floods the plains of  
France.

The path of empire follows in its train;  
The western world it gives to Charlemagne.  
Still on it goes, the straits of Dover crossed;  
England opposes, but her cause is lost;  
The island fills, no land is left — then she  
Starts out to grasp the empires of the sea.

Who planned this movement? What impelled the  
tide?

Kings tried to stop it, but as vainly tried.  
— How quickly is the frail conundrum guessed !  
— It was Old Business — he was going west.

This bright New World — its wonderful career  
Is too well known to be examined here.  
Its hopes, its progress, rapid and diverse,  
Need greater inspiration to rehearse.  
To-day we turn the hour-glass, and anew  
The sands of a fresh century start through.

On July Fourth we always float the flag  
And push the old bald-eagle from the crag;

Fly him the length and breadth of this fair land,  
From the Penobscot to the Rio Grande;  
Then, without rest, we quickly start him on  
A trip from Florida to Oregon;  
Then bring him back, and boost him to the sky,  
And let him stay there till the next July.  
O grand old bird, o'er many a weary mile  
They 've made you sail in oratoric style,  
While fledgeling speakers, in refulgent prose,  
Capped many a gorgeous climax as you rose.  
To-day our choicest colors are unfurled —  
Soar up, proud bird, and circle 'round the world;  
And we predict that nowhere will you find  
A place like Kansas that you left behind.

He who has lived in Kansas, though he roam,  
Can find no other spot and call it "Home."  
As Ingalls says, a Kansas man may stray —  
May leave — perchance depart, or go away;  
In short, may roam; but be it anywhere,  
He must return, if he can raise the fare.  
No other State those wants so well subserve  
Of enterprise, of energy, of nerve;  
No other State more thoroughly maintains  
A deep, firm hold on enterprise and brains;  
No other State has held a greater power  
To meet the harsh requirements of the hour.

Though border war her cities overrun,  
Though swarms of locusts shade the summer sun,  
No matter what misfortunes may occur,  
The State goes on as if they never were.  
Cities arise where towns were burned before,  
The prairies sparkle with the church and store,  
And painted harvesters, fleet after fleet,  
Like yachts, career through seas of waving wheat.

We all believe in Kansas; she 's our State,  
With all the elements to make her great —  
Young men, high hopes, proud dreams — 't is ours to  
see

The State attain to what a State should be.

And when a hundred years have drifted by,  
When comes the next Centennial July;  
When other orators, in other verse,  
Far better days in better ways rehearse;  
When other crowds, composed of other men,  
Shall re-enact the present scene again;  
May they be able then to say that she  
Is all that we have wished the State to be.

THE MEDICINE MAN  
[*A Story of a Kansas Pioneer*]

PREAMBLE

STORIES often teem with sadness — this is desolate  
and grim;

It is of a Kansas doctor, and the way we treated him.  
And the object of these verses is an eloquent appeal  
To those higher, nobler feelings that, of course, you  
know you feel.

Any man who hears this story is obliged to shed a  
tear;

When I read it to the editor that runs the *Pioneer*,  
Hopeless melancholy seized him, and for thirty days,  
or more,

He was wading round in gum boots through the tears  
upon the floor.

STORY

Out to Kansas came a doctor, wide awake and full of  
pluck;

Up in Atchison he settled, and he leaned up close to  
luck.

There he hung out his diploma, and he stayed from  
spring to fall,

But he never saw an invalid, and never got a call.

Colonel Martin then advised him that more practice  
could be got,

If he only shipped his talent to suburban Wyandotte.

Up in Wyandotte he lingered just about a year in all,

And he talked about his college, but he never reached  
a call.

Buchan said: "Raid Topeka"; but Taylor calmly said:  
"Try Leavenworth or Lawrence, 'hwich' are better,  
in their stead."

Lawrence, Leavenworth, Topeka yielded similar re-  
sults,—

He felt much disappointment, but he did n't feel much  
pulse.

One day he met with Murdock, who observed: "Come  
down below;

Try the Nile of sunny Kansas"; and the doctor said  
he 'd go.

First he cashed a fat ancestral draft; then, plunging in  
the dark,

Gave to fortune and to Murdock the direction of his  
bark.

Down at Wichita he anchored, but his chance was just  
as slim;

His bark was all Peruvian — they had no need of him.

Shortly after he had "opened out" in busy Wichita,  
He absorbed by merest accident the rudiments of  
"draw."

His office stayed unopened for a few eventful days;  
He diagnosed that noble game in all its wondrous  
ways.

One eve he found a bob-tailed flush of unimportant  
size;  
He stayed behind it and became a pauper in disguise.

Said he: "This 'bleeding Kansas' is no place for me  
to dwell —

One 'call' in three years and a half, and the man that  
'called' was well!"

A very lonesome shirt or two into his trunk he  
stored,

He left his watch in mortmain with his landlord for  
his board;

He straightened up, disgusted, and relieved his bur-  
dened mind

With opinions of the country he was now to leave  
behind.

"There is something to this country which I do not  
understand:

Working, scheming, trade, and business, lively law-  
suits, labor, land;

There is not that noble yearning here for pills and  
cultured thought,  
All my classic erudition is both useless and unsought;  
And the people, as I find them, are as ignorant as  
geese  
Of the woes of Asia Minor and the Iliad of Greece.

“No one stops to read my sheepskin that has hung  
from week to week;  
No one ever mentions Ajax, no one ever mentions  
Greek.  
People suffer in abundance from the most unheard-of  
health,  
And they keep acquiring lawsuits and accumulating  
wealth.  
Day by day a man keeps working, just as happy as a  
clam,  
If he only has the cash to buy a lawsuit and a ham.

“Only yesterday I saw a man I thought would surely  
die;  
He had got a compound, comminuted fracture of the  
thigh.  
Aching but a half an hour or so, the leg declined  
to swell;  
He poured cold water on it, and the next day it was  
well.

Then he worked six hours that afternoon, and, ere  
the sun went down,  
He had got into a lawsuit with the fattest man in  
town.

“Now and here I pack my little trunk. By vum! I  
would n’t stay  
In climates where a man gets old, dries up, and blows  
away;  
Would n’t live in a community where fortunes every  
week  
Can be made by men without the slightest rudiments  
of Greek.  
Let me — let me find some sickly, classic, sentimental  
spot.  
Here, sir! check my baggage eastward, *via* Paint  
Creek and Fort Scott.”

Then he wiped the perspiration from his high and  
noble brow,  
And he filed some affidavits that I don’t remember  
now.  
Shortly after this, a mule train, from the westward  
coming slow,  
Camped beside the raging Paint Creek, with the  
doctor on the go.



An old army mule that evening, after supper, just  
for fun,  
Kicked and broke the doctor's arms and legs, and all  
his ribs but one.

This old mule would make a hero for a romance or  
a song;  
When the drums beat, and the bugles sounded battle  
loud and long,  
He enlisted in the army, and he helped to pull a train  
Up the mountains, down the valleys, through the  
sunshine and the rain;  
And right well he served his country, for he knew  
where duty lay;  
He could live for weeks on end-gates when they  
could n't give him hay.

No complaining, no desertion; through the gumbo  
to the hub,  
Week by week our long-eared hero jerked a wagon-  
load of grub.  
Lightning struck him, cannon shot him, but he never  
failed nor flunked;  
Danger left him as it found him—undiscouraged,  
undefunct.  
And in all my army service I have never seen a mule  
With a keener comprehension of the educated fool.

He would spot a man instanter, if he overheard him  
speak

About Darwin, Herbert Spencer, Correlation, Force  
or Greek;

He would work and watch in silence, and look sheep-  
ish day by day,

One eye closed in meditation, till that man got in his  
way;

Then that person's friends were lucky if they did not  
have to make

A collection of their comrade with a basket and a rake.

Three long days and nights the doctor in my shanty  
did remain:

Oftentimes he'd grow despondent, and have symp-  
toms of a pain:

Oftentimes he'd seem discouraged, and would say in  
accents weak:

"Oh! condemn a State where folks get rich without a  
word of Greek."

Then his language would get flighty from the pressure  
of his ills,

Mixing Latin, Greek, and Ajax up with three jacks,  
checks, and pills.

But I knew he would recover, or, at least, I thought I  
knew

That the ozone in the climate was dead sure to bring  
him through.

On the fifth day, convalescent, rose this damaged guest  
of mine,

And upon the sixth, all right, but sad, he crossed the  
Kansas line.

Left behind him in his exit were ambition, hope, and  
spunk:

Kansas retained his enmity — Paint Creek retained his  
trunk.

Now, a true poetic justice very rigidly asserts  
That I ought to add a sequel to our hero and his shirts;  
And a thorough comprehension of the reason of the  
rule

Says the sequel might embody something further of  
the mule.

Well, our hapless, trunkless hero has regained his  
native State,

He 's æsthetic, he 's got wisdom, and is honored—but  
sedate;

He has found congenial country, rich and sickly, so to  
speak,

Where the people live on coupons, and like medicine  
and Greek;

And a very pleasant stipend he is able now to draw

From the active perspiration of his large and manly  
    jaw.

He has gotten out a volume, which a leading paper  
    said

Showed a vast amount of learning, and a very level  
    head;

And he lectures to the students in the colleges near  
    by;

And he tells about ambition — how a man should do  
    or die;

Talks of allegoric eagles flying upward to the sun;

Tells them all about success in life, and how the thing  
    is done.

And he lectures those poor students all about the roll  
    of fame —

How a man should take a broad-axe, as it were, and  
    hew a name;

Talks of noble, high endeavor, and refers in strains  
    sublime

To those antiquated footsteps left upon those sands of  
    time.

These same lectures have been printed — they're the  
    best I ever saw;

But they do not mention Kansas, and they don't refer  
    to "draw."

Now *my* heart would swell with pathos, and *my*  
    language fill with gush,

Just to think what nerve it takes to stay behind a bob-tail flush;

But, of course, it is n't business for a lecturer to speak  
Of such subjects to a people who are so diseased  
with Greek.

But if they will send these students to the shore of  
Yellow Paint —

To that boulder-drifted shore, where the angry bil-  
lows roar,

And the women loudly snore, whether they 're asleep  
or ain't —

I could tell them in *my* lecture that there seems to be  
a law

That applies as well to greatness as we know it does  
to "draw."

If you have some pairs to draw to, and have only got  
the sand,

You may make the world a pauper on the first or  
second hand.

If you have no pair to draw to, you must "ante" and  
must wait:

You are likely to be gobbled, but not likely to be  
great.

Fame is something like the waiter that went roaring  
down the hall,

Giving neither bread nor greatness to the man with  
one fish-ball.

When the summer moon is beaming on the prairie  
and the stream,  
When my silver-lighted shanty seems the palace of  
a dream,  
Then I sit out on my wood-pile, and I ponder very  
fast  
O'er the somewhat funny present, and the much more  
funny past;  
Think of things that might have happened — things  
forgotten long ago —  
How the past had changed the present had it hap-  
pened so and so.  
Then I think about the future, and the turn that things  
may take;  
And I say: "Hopes are but dreamings of a person wide  
awake";  
Then I add: "Good-bye, old Mundane," as to couch  
and dreams I go;  
"I'm the bachelor of Paint Creek, and my name is  
JOSEPH JOE."

## THE SHORT-HAIRED POET

[Delivered to an editorial convention]

POEMS and poets and poetic lays  
Have almost filled their missions and their days;  
The times have passed when minstrels' lyric strings  
Depicted battles and applauded kings.

The time is past of sovereigns and seers;  
The time is past of paladins and peers;  
Once more again is coming on the stage  
The long-lost era of an iron age.

The days of long-haired poets now are o'er;  
The short-haired poet seems to have the floor;  
And now the world no more attends to rhymes  
That do not catch the spirit of the times.

Who cares *who* stole the coupons of old Cræsus?  
Who cares who stole the Thracian steeds of Rhesus?  
Who cares how Menelaus lost his wife?  
Who cares how Mr. Paris lost his life?

What matters it how Alba Longa grew,  
Flourished, and plundered every one it knew?  
To long-haired poets themes like these belong —  
The short-haired poet sings another song.

The short-haired poet has no muse nor chief;  
He sings of corn; he eulogizes beef:  
And in the spring-time his æsthetic soul  
Bursts forth in vernal eulogies on coal.

He thinks the sunflower nothing but a weed,  
And thinks far less of fancy than of feed.  
The power of kings, in his poetic dream,  
Can cut no figure with the power of steam.

These long-haired themes abandoned in a lump,  
He sings of Business — “business from the jump”;  
And in this verse we hope that you will find  
A modest poem of the brief-haired kind.

Our theme is Business, and we gladly sing  
That which the world now honors as its king;  
Although we hear of crowns and titled gold,  
Flour and pig-iron now the scepter hold.

The time is precious, and the world's mad rush  
Stops not for moonshine, sentiment, nor gush.  
Untimely is the minstrel who essays  
The pomp or pride of royalty to praise.



For, at the present, man's progressive scope  
Is due far less to royalty than soap;  
Is due far more to workshops and to farms —  
Briarean Business with its hundred arms.

I'll tell a story of those games of old  
Which all the nations gathered to behold;  
Where arms and harpers struggled, and obtained  
The laurel prizes which the victors gained;

And where the vast assemblage shouted loud  
To praise a victor and to do him proud.  
And I will tell you how it happened here  
That two contesting harpers did appear.

A golden harp one to the trial bore,  
A golden fillet on his forehead wore;  
And from his shoulder, with embroidered fold,  
Did hang a mantle of brocaded gold.

The other harper to the contest brings  
An iron harp, with ripe, sonorous strings;  
His hair was brief, and there at times did fly  
That bilious glare of genius from his eye.

The vast assemblage standing round about  
Received the harpers with a deafening shout,  
And when at last the tumult died away  
The judges motioned for the harps to play.

Gilded Chloranthus now begins his song,  
Which jars in harsh, repugnant notes along;  
He sings of kings, and gold. Alas! it finds  
But little favor in the judges' minds.

The audience listen, and are not exempt  
From feelings both of anger and contempt.  
He sings how gold, not brains, controls the earth;  
How gold makes rank, and then how rank makes  
worth;

That kings are heaven-appointed, and maintains  
That gold can buy all bravery, and all brains.  
Chloranthus ceased, and through the crowd there  
went  
An unmistakable symptom of dissent.

And now, with notes sonorous, clear, and sharp,  
Begins Timesis of the iron harp.  
He sings how iron makes a nation proud;  
He sings how gold to iron always bowed;

Sings of unvalled, yet iron-guarded towns;  
He sings of iron keels, and iron crowns;  
How Klion's golden helmet failed to save  
Beneath the blow of Thraxis' iron glaive.

He sang how Midas begged so long and much  
The gift Jove gave him of the golden touch,  
And how at last king Midas tried to shift  
The consequences of the fatal gift.

And then he sang how princely Glaucus sold  
His dingy arms for arms of solid gold;  
How, on the field, the wounded Glaucus lay,  
While victors bore the arms and sash away;

How, in the fight, his ardent course was checked,  
His golden shield unable to protect.  
Thus from the iron wire the music swept;  
Thus through the song the classic phantoms stepped—

And ceasing, said: “Of kingly power and gold  
Too much already are the people told.”  
And when the wire ceased trembling, long and loud  
Came up the approbation of the crowd.

Gilded Chloranthus asks another trial,  
And meeting from the judges no denial,  
He starts again, but vainly he aspires  
To tempt the music from the gilded wires.

Than kings and gold no other song he sings;  
No other notes will leave the golden strings;  
And when he starts another lyric bold,  
It breaks and runs into “the power of gold.”

Then from the crowd a fitful murmur rose  
That brought his hapless efforts to a close;  
And when at last the crowd was silent, then  
The iron harp and harper start again.

He sings of hardships, and he sings of arts —  
Twin themes responsive in all human hearts;  
He sings of mariners, he sings of mines;  
He sings of viaducts, he sings of vines;

He sings how sturdy workmen tug upon  
The marble ledges of Pentelicon.  
He sings of piers built out in ocean foams;  
Of “woven-winged, sea-wandering sailor-homes”;<sup>‡</sup>

Of daring pilots, guiding at the helm  
Commercial tri-remes to some distant realm.  
He sings of bridges, and he sings of roads;  
Of Spartan manners and of iron codes;

He sings of Marathon and of Platea,  
And how republics fight for an idea.  
He sings the future, and the First Great Cause;  
The birth of morals and the growth of laws;

How nations owe far less to soldiers' drill  
Than to the forge, and iron-worker's skill;

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\* Æschylus.

How private rights will slow and surely fail,  
As labor lowers in the social scale;

How Freedom grows; how tyrannies decay,  
As arts evolve, and labor gets its pay.  
And as along Timesis pours his song,  
A frightful frenzy seizes on the throng;

They strip the golden harper of his crown,  
And in the race-course it is trampled down;  
The golden mantle from his shoulders wrung.  
And in the sea harper and harp are flung.

And then Timesis sang a song of old:  
“Thus perish they who sing of kings and gold.”

Now do not burlesque what Timesis said,  
And, Twain-like, ask me if the man is dead.  
Your blank expressions, like a billiard cue,  
Carom me back to what I had in view —  
Which was, to soar in rash, poetic notes;  
To sing of pigs, macadam, poultry, oats.

I would not mix at this auspicious time  
Low, drawling verses on hydraulic lime;  
But in Icarian flight would seek the skies  
On carpets, coal oil, cotton, railroad ties.

Fain would I sing of prints, of coffee A;  
Of harness, harrows, hoop-poles, hymn-books, hay.  
Fain would I sing of rope whose twisted coil  
Holds new-washed shirts and horse-thieves from the  
soil;

Of Kansas fire-brick that can stand "cremation";  
Of blacksmiths' bellows that can stand "inflation";  
Of arts and artisans both great and small —  
But we must cease; our verse won't hold them all.

A long-haired bard a story once did spin;  
I'll clip its hair, and gently lead it in.  
It says that in Laomedon's employ  
Old Neptune built the battlements of Troy;

And when he asked the monarch for his pay,  
The monarch stood him back and answered, "Nay."  
Then Neptune struck his trident on the strand,  
And steel-clad squadrons issued from the sand;

He beat his trident on the ocean's banks —  
Up sprang battalions with their iron ranks.  
The king was filled with terror and dismay;  
He issued bonds and Neptune got his pay.

O king-crowned Business! from thy height sublime  
Thou overlookest every land and clime.

Alike thou seest where thy Southern sails  
Plow up the billows and repulse the gales;

As where the Northern steamers from their track  
Beat both the wild winds and the wild waves back,  
No longer dost thou stretch thy feeble hands  
O'er inland seas, and river-bounded lands;

No longer on the ocean to and fro,  
Borne by the breezes, do thy galleys go:  
That time is over, and thou now dost bring  
The world to do thee homage as its king.

More potently than Neptune art thou crowned;  
Beat down thy iron trident on the ground,  
And ere the echo of the blow is done  
The brick-built cities sparkle in the sun;

Beat down thy trident where the sea surf raves,  
And snow-white navies rise amid the waves;  
And where thy iron trident strikes the strand  
The cities' maritime in clusters stand.

But when thy energy is turned away  
The nations crumble, and the states decay;  
And blocks Cyclopean in the sands lie drifted,  
To show how empires fade, how realms are rifted,  
When from their soul thy trident has been lifted.

The world is but an ocean of unrest  
Whose tidal billows wander to the West;  
For age on age the ancient East did hold  
Unnumbered people and uncounted gold.

Most happy Kansas! prosperous and free,  
She rests upon the margin of the sea;  
And day by day upon her shores are hurled  
The tidal billows of the olden world.

And Business now, with unremitting toil  
Goes beating down his trident on the soil;  
And, as he moves, the fields of yellow grain  
Rise waving on the prairie and the plain;

And scarce the soil his iron trident meets,  
Up springs a city with a hundred streets;  
The streets are crowded, Business gives a smile,  
And moves on, pounding in Neptunian style.

O'er Western wilds the printing-press each year  
Becomes a braver, bolder pioneer.  
No dangers daunt it, and no toils o'ertax;  
It camps beside the rifle and the axe;

And while the night stars in the west decline,  
The types are clicking on the picket-line;  
And where to-day unnumbered wild deer run,  
To-morrow's trade, like Memnon, greets the sun.



Once Noble Prentis did a story tell  
About one mule, that tumbled in a well;  
And how they threw down straw, until, all right,  
The mule just tramped his way up to the light.

The Kansas Press has had that way to do —  
To leave the bed-rock and to work up through.  
The well is filled — the times have changed since  
    then;  
The mule is out and can't fall back again.

The last year's wildernesses bloom to-day;  
“Through scars to stars” the live State makes its  
    way.

In such progressive times as these we guess  
Most easily the duty of the Press.

The duty of the Press is, day by day,  
To swindle old Oblivion of his prey.  
It is its special duty to reveal  
The frightful havoc of some foeman's *steal*;  
Like porcupines to fling a lively quill,  
Or hurl plumbago with destructive skill.

The epic bard, the minstrel with his rhymes,  
Were once the sole historians of the times;  
Barbaric night has fled before the dawn:  
The harps lie stringless, and the bards are gone.

The printing-press has now usurped their power  
And clanks Clionian music hour by hour;  
While from the pen the ink-drops, day by day,  
Are drowning kings, and washing thrones away

The local Press should sedulously strive  
To build up business and to make it 'live.  
Business is what the people want to hear;  
The Press should echo it from far and near.

No town can hope prosperity and trade,  
Unless the Press shall vigorously aid.  
The local Press must utter loud and long  
Commercial lyrics in unceasing song;  
Must sing, in notes sonorous, clear, and sharp,  
Songs that re-echo like Timesis' harp.

But if the Press, in irresponsive strains,  
Shall fail to sing of business and of brains;  
Shall leave the people and the people's toil;  
Shall rise above the workshop and the soil;

And if the people shall at last behold  
A Press responsive to the power of gold,  
A change will come; and then the Press will be  
Thrown, like the gilded harper — in the sea.

With such high duties honored, we may guess  
What is the future mission of the Press.

'T is theirs to be, as in some clock-tower high,  
Seeing and seen by all, both far and nigh;

'T is theirs to be the dial of the times,  
And mark the progress of all lands and climes.  
As useful arts come struggling up through trial,  
The Press records them on its iron dial;

And as its iron fingers slowly mark  
The forward movement on the iron arc,  
The world looks up with fervor from below,  
Watching the iron minutes come and go.

What Kansas wants is pioneers, not partisans;  
Wants poorer orators but better artisans.  
The politicians have become redundant,  
The moribund ones should be mori-bundant.

We've gathered here from places far away;  
Have brought our knitting and intend to stay;  
And all of us — the greater part, at least —  
Like ancient wise men, came here from the East.

We do not live so elegant and well  
As we've been "used to" — if you heard us tell —  
For some of us in marble halls lived grand;  
And now our only hauls are, hauling sand.

And those who nations' destinies might sway,  
Are out here breaking prairie by the day.  
Men who have led brigades with bugle sounding  
Are here police, nomadic pigs impounding.

Men for whom senates would suspend their rules  
Are using oratory, here, to mules;  
And he who watered Eastern stock, completes  
His education, here, in watering streets.

But over this we must not feel depressed —  
We 're building up the empire of the West.  
We have our ills, but these will soon be passed;  
Sorrows, like boots, are n't always on the last.  
These trifling troubles soon will shrink away  
Like dew, and gamblers, at the break of day.

Your honored names we gladly would applaud  
Who visit us this evening from abroad;  
Although not well acquainted, we meanwhile  
Have read your papers and we like your style.  
We do not let your efforts go to waste;  
We have applauded with the shears and paste;  
And, speaking metaphorically, thus  
We stuck to you, and hope you will to us.

## A ROMANCE

### PREFACE

WHEN a person knows a story that he thinks he ought to tell,  
If he does n't get to tell it, why of course he don't feel well;  
And if no one stops to listen, why of course a man will feel  
All broke up and dislocated, and uneasy as an eel;  
That 's the reason that I ask you, in a sad, imploring way:  
Here 's a little, bob-tailed gushlet, I will tell it if you stay.

### CHAPTER I

Well! the heroes of my story are a maiden and a youth;  
Sam was raised in Indiana, and the girl lived in Duluth.  
Where my subjects met each other, I presume I can't relate —

I am told it was Wisconsin, and suppose it is the  
State;  
Sam was storing ardent spirits, and engaged in ped-  
dling stencils,  
While the girl was mangling hash with some old  
hotel utensils;  
And they met and loved each other, in that rash,  
erratic way  
That is told of in the novel, or is acted in the play.  
How a man can go distracted on a female, as her  
lover,  
Is a mystery to me that I never could discover:  
And I wish I could discover why a woman likes a  
man  
With such *horrible* devotion, but I don't believe  
I can.

On the shores of Yellow Paint,  
After winter, cold and chill,  
When the spring-time strikes its focus,  
By what magic hocus-pocus  
Come the primrose and the crocus,  
On the meadow and the hill?  
Whyfore buds the hamamelis?  
Whyfore twining up the trellis?  
Whyfore, from the painted lattice,  
Does the columbine peep at us?

If you 'll answer this, I 'll fill  
You with ardent spirits gratis.

In this world of mirth and music. pork, pomposity  
and pain,  
There is absolutely nothing human beings can explain.  
Here I leave the realms of reason, disappointed as  
I am,  
And return unto my subject, the Wisconsin girl and  
Sam.

Oh, the way they loved each other, it is vain to try  
to tell —

Why! they sickened all the boarders of a second-  
class hotel;

This, of course, used up the landlord, who collapsed  
for want of custom —

He ran off and left the merchants he was owing, and  
it bust 'em;

Then the heavy business fortunes went a-tumbling  
into wrecks,

And the banks began suspending and a-certifying  
checks.

Oh, such frantic, furious loving, rabid, restless, reck-  
less, rash!

No! the people could n't stand it, and the city went  
to smash;

All the taxes went delinquent, and the subjects of our  
stanzas

Fished their trunks out of the window, and en-routed  
it for Kansas.

(Pyrotechnic exhibitions of affection ought to grieve —  
But they 've made the world a circus ever since the  
days of Eve.

Should you call these words ironic, you will make a  
big mistake,

For ferruginous remarks are just the kind I never  
make.)

At this point I end my story; by the way that you  
receive it,

And the honest way I tell it, I believe that you believe it.

#### CHAPTER II

On the shores of Yellow Paint, where the billows  
loudly roar,

Where the blue-eyed zephyrs faint, and the blue-eyed  
women snore,

On a bluff beside the billows — on a bold, projecting  
bluff —

Stands a large and stately building, that is made of  
native stuff;

And around it are the meadows, and the orchards and  
the fields;



High-priced cattle lowing gently, while the modest  
Berkshire squeals;  
And around it leaves of autumn promenade with reckless rustle,  
And around it Kansas zephyrs play with customary muscle.  
Do you ask me who resides here — I must say in tearful tones,  
That said building is infested by a bachelor called  
“Jones.”

On the shores of Yellow Paint, where the billows sadly rave,  
And unhappy zephyrs wail o’er the graveyard and the grave,  
Where the cypress and the yew let the struggling sunbeams through,  
And the marble bids adieu to the beautiful and brave,  
Stands a splendid mausoleum, and the interesting annals  
Of the owner are presented *in extenso* on the panels;  
And the tomb is minaretted with a white Carrara shaft,  
That is longer than the oar-pole of a Mississippi raft.

Should you ask me what proud being underneath this  
marble lies,

Should you ask whose loving fingers caused these  
souvenirs to rise,  
Should you ask me whose loud virtues on the marble  
are set down —  
Having given a perusal, I should say his name was  
Brown.

Brown, you see, was very wealthy, and they built this  
to attract  
The attention of the bugler, when the final doom was  
cracked.  
On the massive marble panels there are finely written  
down  
Many schedules of the virtues and nobilities of Brown—  
Many virtues great and rare; but I cannot help from  
feeling  
They omitted Brown's best virtue — legal, lawful,  
thrifty stealing.

### CHAPTER III

Now I think I hear you tell me, in the most emphatic  
tones,  
“Tell your story — blast your Paint Creek! — we  
don't care for Brown or Jones.”  
I repel the interruption, and besides, this slight digres-  
sion

Has been told by way of kindness, to correct a false impression.

It might happen in the future that you 'd visit Yellow Paint,

Where the billows wildly roar, where the saucy sea-gulls soar,

And the women loudly snore, whether they 're asleep or ain't;

And beholding Jones's "lay-out," you would instantly declare

Our romantic hoop-pole lover was a-living over there.

Then you 'd pass along in silence, and your heart grow cold and sad,

And you 'd take a dose of "ruin," if the fluid could be had;

And you 'd talk of deathless loving, and devotion deep and true;

All at once you 'd see Brown's marble 'mid the cypress and the yew —

Tomb of him o'er whose bright virtues an inscription sadly grieves,

While the column flings its outline through the mesh-work of the leaves;

And you 'd say, "See there! that column; it must certainly belong

To the wild Wisconsin maiden — she who loved so  
    deep and strong”;  
And you’d go and tell the story to the first one you  
    would see —  
Tell how wildly strong their love was; tell how  
    Samuel and she  
Produced a first-class panic and demoralized a town.  
You’d say, “There sleeps her potash”— you’d turn  
    and point to Brown.

But you would n’t be correct, for some long-haired,  
    frontier mammoth  
Wed the girl and started westward, and they’re living  
    out at Klamath.  
Four large boys get daily flouncings from the tough,  
    maternal withe,  
And a woman runs that outfit, by the novel name of  
    Smith.

Sam is keeping a saloon up in Canada, Toronto,  
And he drinks his ardent spirits, just like you do.  
    when you want to;  
Naught he careth for the maiden, whether she’s ex-  
    tant or not,  
For she long has been forgotten, just as Sam has been  
    forgot.

## CHAPTER IV

From the shores of Yellow Paint,  
Where the billows loudly roar,  
From that adamantine shore,  
Where the blue-eyed zephyrs faint,  
And the women loudly snore,  
Whether they 're asleep or ain't,  
Comes the burden of my song.

When you love a girl, you ough't  
Not to make it sweet and short —  
Love her light, but love her long.  
If you love her wild and strong,  
You will soon be better taught —  
She will leave you without thought.  
Should you have a maiden's love —  
Love her light, but love her long.

I'm opposed to moralizing, in a solemn spot like  
this,  
But in fact man ain't constructed for a heavy strain of  
bliss.  
Human beings are like boilers, and the same rules, it  
would seem,  
Have an equal application to affection and to steam.  
Making love and putting steam on will entail the  
same mishaps —

When you get on too much pressure, all is lost by a  
collapse.

Now, I think I hear you ask me, in the most implor-  
ing tones,

“Do us full poetic justice — tell us, what became of  
Jones?”

On the shores of Yellow Paint, break the angry  
billows still;

Still the marble column gleams, and the angry white  
gull screams,

While the habitat of Jones still is seen upon the hill;  
There the able-bodied zephyrs, with their melancholy  
moans,

Rock my native-lumber shanty — *I'm* the bachelor  
called JONES.

THE KANSAS BANDIT  
OR  
THE FALL OF INGALLS

---

[ALONZO, *the Bandit, is seen walking up and down  
the Hiattville road, near Yellow Paint  
Creek, Kansas*]

(*He speaks :*)

“**H**ERE I parade the banks of classic Paint, while  
Poverty doth like a setting hen upon me  
Fortunes brood.

The times were once when from  
Gigantic war recovering, the currency was to the  
Wants of business equal. With scanty rites,  
Economy, the sickly child of poverty, was then in  
Graveyard buried. Apace the times have changed.  
Draw-poker for the last four years remuneration  
Hath not yielded. Me constitution doth the full  
Assimilation of me normal rum refuse. No longer  
Will the credulous ‘bootlegger’ accept me  
Promises. While upon the street women of

Doubtful reputation snub me. The avenues of  
 Honest labor all seem closed. The preachers on  
 The roof do jeer at me down on the pavement.  
 The times, the times are like a mule-kicked lantern  
 Shattered: and all because the people do not rule."

*[Walks up and down between Marmaton and Hiatt-  
 ville. Harrison Kelley is seen plowing  
 in the distance]*

*(ALONZO speaks:)*

"Now on the banks of classic Paint I stand,  
 With deathless nerve I clutch this trenchant brand,  
 By fortune crowded to the latest ditch,  
 War I proclaim against both poor and rich.  
 And now and here, importunate and rash  
 I face the world — exclusively for cash."

*[Music by the orchestra. ALONZO parades, wrapped  
 in a linen duster and profound thought. A  
 stranger appears. ALONZO draws a  
 sigh and a scythe]*

ALONZO. "Halt. Stand. Ducats or blood.  
 Of which hast thou the mostest?"

*[The stranger strikes an attitude and replies:]*

"My sir — I am in occupation holy,  
 I am a follower of the meek and lowly;



Do not detain me — I have got a scheme  
To get an office. Most of blood I seem  
To have at present. Ducats are a fiction;  
I give thee all I have — a benediction.

Before I got in politics, dear Bandit,  
I had a pulpit, and right well I manned it.  
I used to tell the story of the cross,  
But now I just talk politics and hoss.  
I'm down on Ingalls now, for his position  
I do not think real sound on prohibition.

And many things he says doth much displease us,  
McGrath says In-galls wants another Jesus.  
Then Ingalls talks of 'iridescent dreams,'  
That government is force — and so it seems  
That while so many others are against him,  
Us moralists have got to be ferninst him."

ALONZO. "Give me thy cash — I fight not Ingalls  
But pöverty."

STRANGER. "I have not cash."

ALONZO. "Pass on."

[*He goes to Wichita. ALONZO soliloquizes :*]

"Times be no more what they did use 'ter —  
A Senatorial Toga that old rooster  
Would not refuse. The times are getting critical

And need a change, when those of race Levitical  
Risk peace and poultry for a place political."

*[Enter tall stranger, with spectacles]*

ALONZO. "Bullion or blood, of which  
Art thou most scanty?  
I'm the Kansas Bandit,  
Stand and ante."

STRANGER. "Art thou the Paint Creek Bandit?"

ALONZO. "I are."

STRANGER. "Do you believe in the purification  
Of Kansas politics and in the decalogue?"

ALONZO. "Distract me not with thy pale cast  
Of thought: what man art thou,  
And where thy cash?"

STRANGER. "I am the Buck of Duke-ing-ham;  
I'm fighting Ingalls every day,  
I'm fighting Ingalls every way,  
I'll make him find out who I am.  
I get my cash all from the South,  
And for that cash I ope my mouth."

ALONZO. "Art thou a farmer?"

STRANGER. "No, I am an agriculturist."

ALONZO. "What is the difference?"

STRANGER. "The farmer works the soil,  
The agriculturist works the farmer."

ALONZO. "Oh, me prophetic soul, the tissue muscular

Which I a feeble remnant in me bosom  
Have — me cardiac formation — yearns  
Now for thee, my long, my long-lost  
Brother, for thou the usual strawberry mark  
Hath got upon thy damaged reputation.”

STRANGER. “Down in thy bootleg now thy corn-  
knife sheath,

While I of deep damnation tell to thee  
A tale of misery that far beneath  
That of thine own hath happened unto me.  
Perhaps you know me by my late biogra-  
phy —  
I am the author of that late Geography.

I wanted to collect the revenue.  
I went to Atchison, and then and there  
I stayed with *Ingalls* for a week or two.  
He put in Leland, and it made me swear.

Then *Ingalls* said, in words that seemed so  
real,

Dear General, won't you proceed to sheol?”

ALONZO. “Thy tale is short, and yet it doth unman me.  
Thou hast more poetry than picayunes,  
More spondees than spondulics —  
Pass on thy way — pass on — thou need'st not  
Ante, for in the game of life, none  
But the dealers ante.”

[*He walks off to Fort Scott. ALONZO speaks:*]

“O finance! of which word our Senators do the last  
Syllable accentuate, in what tartarian gloom are  
All thy maxims shrouded. The People's Party, to  
Which me native instinct draws me because it  
Loves the rule of mediocrity, is now on top. I  
Love the rule of Ignorance. I love to see a granger  
Who does n't know a pine refrigerator from a legal  
Maxim, discourse on finance, whittling on a store  
box.”

[*Enter stranger*]

ALONZO. “What, hoe! Stand and deliver.”

STRANGER. “Who art thou? Speak!”

ALONZO. “I am a Bandit. I am what Ed. Smith  
Doth call a ‘sovereign squat.’ — Dis-  
gorge.”

STRANGER. “I also am a kind of Bandit. I run  
An anti-Ingalls newspaper. I have no cash.  
I take up a collection as I go, to pay  
My operating expenses — including my  
Fixed charges. I try to keep my operating  
Expenses within fifty-five per cent. of  
My gross receipts. I could do better did  
Not my pooling contract with Willetts  
Disturb my traffic.”

ALONZO. "Thou dost prevaricate. Thou art not an  
Editor of the People's Party. Thou hast  
On a clean shirt."

STRANGER. "But a dirty undershirt — an awful dirty  
one."

ALONZO. "'T is well — but then — I want no shirt.  
Wealth must I have — disgorge."

STRANGER. "I have no wealth."

ALONZO. "What hast thou, then?"

STRANGER. "I have intellect — lately discovered—like  
The salt at Hutchinson, but still I've got it."

ALONZO. "That will I take; and with this ghastly steel,  
Which now in circles with violence centrifugal  
I brandish, all above thy ears will I dissever,  
And make thee like the headless hen of  
Wichita, fed through the gullet with a goose  
Quill. All that thou needest is thy  
Cere-bellum in these post-bellum days.

A howler of calamity,  
He needs no brains, for damit 'e,  
Can work on cheek and vanity,  
Big whiskers and inanity."

[*Smites off all of his head above his ears. The editor  
walks off with his ears sticking up, saying:*]

"I have foiled that rude ruffian's sagacity —  
Though I've lost my formation cerebral,

There 's no darkness, however tenebral,  
That can't be lit up with mendacity.

I 'll gather in all the appliances  
Of the usual Kansas hypocrisy,  
Charge Ingalls with sheer aristocracy  
And ram the charge through the Alliances.

And I 'll talk with a random velocity  
Of his absolute want of ability,  
Of his world understood imbecility,  
Of his social and public atrocity.

And then as a simple memorial  
Of what his career has so signified,  
I 'll take up his toga most dignified  
And wrap it around my corporeal.'

[*Exit stranger*]

ALONZO. "Ha! I 'll let him go.—He 's traveling  
Upon his cerebellum. He must be careful  
Or Web. Wilder won't let him do business  
In the State.

I love calamity. I love to howl it  
And to hear it howled. My poetry is  
Good although my luck is not. Here  
Are some verses which I wrote and

Paraphrased from the *Chicago Mail*.  
I'll send them to the *Pioneer* :

## THE DOLE OF THE KANSAS POP

Nothing to talk but language,  
Nothing to hear but sound,  
Nothing to whittle but boxes,  
Nothing to plow but ground.

Nothing to hold but aces,  
Nothing to hate but hash,  
Nothing to cheese but racket,  
Nothing to earn but cash.

Nowhere to rise but upward,  
Nowhere to drop but down,  
Nowhere to be but in it,  
Nowhere to stay but town.

Nothing to seek but office,  
Nothing to drink but "rye,"  
Nothing to breathe but ozone,  
Nothing to eat but pie.

Nothing to vote but ballots,  
Nothing to fear but naught,  
Nothing to howl but reform,  
Nothing to think but thought.

What is the use of working?  
What is the use of trying?  
Life is no more worth living,  
Death is no more worth dying.

*[Enter stranger, with quick step]*

ALONZO. "Pause! Gold or gore."

STRANGER. "I defy thee."

ALONZO. "Defy me not. Dost thou upon that  
Sand discern that object?"

STRANGER. "I do. It is a geode."

ALONZO. "It is not a geode."

STRANGER. "Then a feldspar boulder."

ALONZO. "No, no! It is a skull."

STRANGER. "Impossible! — It hath no cavity."

ALONZO. "Gaze on this burnished weapon:  
Dost thou aught discover?"

STRANGER. "I do not."

ALONZO. "Gaze closer."

STRANGER. "I see a fly-speck."

ALONZO. "That is his brain, his editorial brain by  
Ray of sunlight desiccated. Nay, do not shrink  
With horror, but come down. My motto:  
Coin or Carnage."

STRANGER. "I am a lawyer, and I stand undaunted.  
Art thy name Alonzo?"

ALONZO. "It art, but thine the duty not to stand a  
Gasing, but aghast. Eliminate thy wealth.

•

I cannot stand and dicker  
Now with thee,



But with a snicker  
Draw my snickersnee."

STRANGER. "Thou art of no more force than a last  
Year's chattel mortgage.

Alonzo, dost remember erst-  
While before a Bourbon county jury when Jim,  
With Ciceronian voice and gesture, thee of mule  
Abduction did accuse, and proved it by some  
Dozen witnesses, although thou sworeest thou wert  
In Emporia? And reckest thou not how thou thy  
Grip didst lose, and how, with white lips, thou  
Saidst — 'Save me from hard labor,' until I told  
Thee that I had Jim foul? And dost thou not  
Remember how that jury had been carefully  
Selected from sympathetic granger statesmen who  
Only read the "Union Labor" papers, and how  
With brilliant panegyric I thy honest brow  
Applauded, and how I called thee a hard-fisted  
Yeoman—victim, I said, of prostrate labor and  
Contraction, seeking for bread amid the ruins of  
Chaotic finance.—victim, I said, of insufficient  
Circulation, buffeted by rent and sleepless usury.  
How with quixotic rhetoric I did fight the gilded  
Vampires in the ambient ether, and how that  
Granger jury was so polly-foxed that they did  
Find a verdict of 'not guilty'?

Over thy past draw thou the dark  
Tarpaulin of oblivion, and let me pass, while round  
Myself I wrap the crusted mantle of forensic  
Glory. I'll be Chief Justice YET."

ALONZO. "'T is true — pass on — but stay. Hast  
Thou the due-bill that I gave thee for thy  
Effort?"

STRANGER. "I have-est. Behold it!"

ALONZO. "I know thou hast no money. — Lawyers  
Are but educated paupers.—Still I can't  
Do business here for nothing. So far I've  
Operated on too small a margin. I now  
Take hold and freeze onto this due-bill.  
In pigmy ways I hogmy earnings in. (*Takes  
bill.*) Git!"

[*Exit lawyer to Garden City.—Tableaux*]

(ALONZO *soliloquizes*.)

"He's gone.—Behold, the sun is slowly setting.  
Why did I take this note? It's only 'fiat.'  
It is n't worth the trouble of the getting.  
I can't hypothecate the thing for diet.  
It's payable to him, and I forgot  
To make the man endorse it on the spot.

But it is good. The penmanship's proficient —  
It must be good — the paper's white and tough.

‘Due on demand’—that ought to be sufficient,  
And certainly the sum is large enough;  
And why the thing won’t buy a loaf of bread  
Is a conundrum that just knocks me dead.

It seems to me that borrower and lender  
Have neither rights the other should respect —  
That each man’s note should be a legal tender,  
Abolishing all methods to collect.  
And then the circulation can be made  
Fully responsive to the wants of trade.

The sum per capita in circulation  
Must be fixed up by Sherman, right away,  
Or revolution will surprise the nation.  
One thousand dollars to the head, some say,  
With more economy would pull us through,  
But I believe I’d rather have it two.

Yet, ’mid all this calamity, there ’s Ingalls—  
What hath he done for Kansas? He doth flaunt  
His brains around, and with the nation mingles,—  
But it is cash, not brains, the people want.  
Down, down with Ingalls! brains don’t represent  
The people *now* in Kansas worth a cent.

*[Tears up the note and throws it away]*

The sun has set. The road no victim offers.  
 I'm catching cold. Business is awful dull.  
 A hollow cough, combined with hollow coffers,—  
 Unless unto some museum this skull —  
 This Kansas editorial skull, I sell,  
 My whole day's work won't pan out very well."

[*A barefooted person, with spectacles, is seen coming*]

ALONZO. "Halt! Who comes there? Art thou a  
 Mound-builder, or a Troubadour?"

STRANGER. "I am a friend with the countersign."

ALONZO. "Advance, friend, and give the  
 Countersign."

STRANGER. "Down with Ingalls."

ALONZO. "The sentiment thou hast, but not the  
 Words. The words are: SOC ET TUUM.  
 As Elder says,— 'them words is Latten.'"

STRANGER. "Sock me no socks. Did not I upon  
 The field of battle meet Prince Hal?  
 Where now is Hal? In those pathetic  
 Words of poetess: 'The bark that held the  
 Prince peeled off.' When the 7th Dist.  
 Did my sockless fibula behold, they yelled  
 For me, and it was good-bye Hal. I know  
 These people. Brains they do not want,  
 For if they did, I'd give it to them.  
 Hal. did not know what beat him —'t was

Lack of moisture in the atmosphere. He  
Was the victim of climatic scarcity. My  
District expects me to produce territorial  
Humidity, and divide the rain-belt with  
The sea-board States. Ingalls could not  
Accomplish it. He therefore failed to be a  
Statesman. What has he done for Kansas?  
All she needs is rain. She having rain  
Has grain, and having grain had Ingalls.  
He could not make it rain, hence naught  
For Kansas had he done. Of course he  
Made some reputation for himself and  
State, and all the Union rang with Kansas  
And with Ingalls. And in the Senate,  
Leaning up against his own backbone, he  
Sat and ruled most royally, as to the  
Intellectual purple born. But still he  
Could n't make it rain, and now we've got  
Him down!

As to the earth the royal ruin falls,  
We'll jeer at Ingalls; — accent on the 'galls.' ”

[*He passes on; drops paper from pocket; ALONZO picks  
it up and reads aloud :*]

“ Will' somebody please explain  
Why we do not get any rain ?

## Rhymes of Ironquill

We 've got prohibition,  
Behold our position:  
No whisky, no beer, no rain.

Will somebody please explain  
Why we have n't got any grain?  
It 's lack of humidity,  
Kansas aridity:  
Because of no rain, no grain.

Will somebody please explain  
Why we have n't got any brain?  
Because all sterility  
Envies ability  
No rain and no grain — hence no brain."

[ALONZO, *frightened*]

"Ha! What is that coming up the road?  
It has a most peculiar aspect.  
I 'll speak to it. What art thou?  
An adverb?"

THING. "No. A high moral plane."

ALONZO. "Thou art a strange thing. Thy object?"

H. M. P. "The object of a high moral plane is to  
Get a reputation for being better than any  
Other thing. Not to *be* better, but to get the  
Reputation. Climb on: our object is to purify  
Politics by running it ourselves. To banish

'Iridescent dreams.' To take up prohibition,  
Female suffrage and the so-called 'moral' isms  
That we can handle. We stuck a man in  
Wichita for selling beer one afternoon  
Seventy years in jail, with 27,000 dollars fine.  
We're down on Ingalls for another reason —  
He's an agnostic and blasphemer. His  
Speeches show he don't believe that there's  
Another happy world where he can go and  
Live forever with us moralists. Then  
He is vain, and vanity is what high moral  
Planes abhor. He lacks that  
Element of Christian humility that should  
Say unto the nearest Presiding Elder — thy  
Will in politics, not mine, be done. We  
Think morality requires a change, and that  
His vanity should be let down. We think  
That on the tombstone of his politics the  
Epitaph should be:

Up was he stuck,  
And in the very upness  
Of his stucktitude  
He fell."

[*H. M. P. passes on*]

ALONZO. "I don't believe I want to climb  
Up on that thing. It holds a tough-looking

But congenial crowd. Prohibition was  
Once the thing to win with, but it ain't so  
Any more. Calamity is what now goes.  
Prohibition is now the last hope which  
Weak minds have for getting into office.  
But where 's my cash upon this lonesome  
Road? There 's no free silver.—Ho!  
Who comes here, in the twilight gloom?"

STRANGER. "A 'noble granger,' who with lung  
Voluminous would fain be heard. My  
Name is Calamity Bill. I have a way of  
Beating mortgages."

ALONZO. "Art thou armed?"

STRANGER. "Yes—with campaign documents."

ALONZO. "If thou hast any gold or silver, extract  
It from thy clothing. I am a hard-money  
Bandit. My demands are now payable in  
Coin 412½ grains, 90 per cent. fine."

STRANGER. "I have none."

ALONZO. "Greenbacks or national-bank notes?"

STRANGER. "None."

ALONZO. "Bonds, coupons, or silver certificates?"

STRANGER. "None."

ALONZO. "Notes, mortgages, securities?"

STRANGER. "None."

ALONZO. "Checks, drafts, bills of lading, or  
Negotiable paper?"



STRANGER. "None."

ALONZO. "Hast anything within thy pockets?"

STRANGER. "Only tobacco."

ALONZO. "Fine-cut or plug?"

STRANGER. "Plug."

ALONZO. "I chew not plug—I 'm a dime-novel  
Bandit. I have no habits. I am a great  
And earnest soul in deep disguise. By  
Force of business necessity compelled  
To rob and steal because there is only  
Twenty dollars per capita in actual  
Circulation. All the rest is hoarded.  
Victim I am of Sherman and the  
Administration. Hast thou good clothes?  
It 's dark—I cannot see."

STRANGER. "I have at home, not here.  
Intending to address the sturdy  
Yeomanry, and whoop them up from an  
Industrial standpoint, I this night did don  
A suit of jeans for the occasion, such  
As I husk corn in."

ALONZO. "Art thy boots good?"

STRANGER. "Out at the toes and minus soles.  
I borrowed them."

ALONZO. "Thy hat?"

STRANGER. "I punched a hole a few yards back.  
And through the crown a matted lock

## Rhymes of Ironquill

I pulled. It's gaily waving through  
The orifice, although thou seest it not.  
I had to-night intended to explain  
Unto the bone and sinew of our country  
How Sherman and McKinley of a wealthy  
People made a nation full of paupers.  
How the Government should issue  
Money at one per cent. on farms, and  
Should build vast warehouses, wherein  
The products of the country can be stored  
And chattel-mortgaged to the Government.  
And how the way to make a dollar is  
To stamp a piece of paper and then  
Call it one. Language, not cash,  
Is all I have just now."

ALONZO. "Condemn the luck! There is  
No scope for honest labor. Every avenue  
Is walled. The horrible contraction  
Of the currency has made less beef,  
Less pork, less everything. Around  
All business enterprises such barrier  
Is drawn that no one can an honest  
Living make. Behold the absolute  
Prostration from which the shores  
Of classic Paint are suf'ring. See  
The depression that me present business  
Now endures. Oh, desperation! Say!

See here. I must make business lively.  
I cannot wait the slow and tedious  
Restoration of those days when no man  
Worked yet everything was had.  
Prepare for death! I think that I can turn  
An honest penny by finding thee when  
A reward is offered. If all were idle,  
Business won't revive. Something  
Accomplished, something done, must earn  
A night's repose. I have within my heart  
Hot cells — ”

STRANGER. “Shut up! Hear me, thou victim  
Of commercial chaos.—Down at  
A school-house there expectant waits  
A Union Labor and Alliance caucus.  
The F. M. B.'s are coming in, and we  
Will talk of Ingalls and of money,  
Ocala, and the platform of St. Louis.  
I go to tell how laws must needs be  
Most unjust that will not let a  
Person beat a creditor. I have  
A money scheme, most noble Bandit,  
That beats two of yours. I can rob more  
Men in fifteen minutes than you can in years.  
With dangers yours is fraught, with mine  
Is none. Shall I reveal?”

ALONZO. “Go on.”

STRANGER. “Thy style is antiquated. Men with  
Views like yours both schemes have tried,  
And the reflecting light of hist’ry hath  
Taught that one can rob more people ten  
To one by the new process than the old.  
First.—Ingalls must be beaten. In his stead  
A man of the Alliance must be placed, here  
And elsewhere—a man of hair. We must  
Have Peffer or a mattress. Then we will  
Take the printing-presses, and make money,  
Loan to farmers at a nominal per cent. on  
Land by farmers valued. Make the money  
Legal tender, then we ’ll scoop ’em in.  
When once we get the timid, invalid, and  
Weak to lose their faith in a metallic  
Currency, we’ve got ’em. They are left.  
We cannot reach the man who pins  
His faith to coin, except to blackguard him,  
And then he only laughs. But the great  
Masses with our doctrine stuffed, under  
Delusion give us property for paper. Of  
Honesty it hath a certain glamour. We  
Hold the truck the paper represents.  
They hold the paper, waiting its redeemer,  
Like Job of old did his, till time hath  
Worn them out and made them toss the  
Sponge. Thy name would give addition

To our ranks. Come, go with me and  
Make thine opening exhortation. Be no  
Longer a Dime Novel Bandit, clad in plume  
And bootlegs.— But — shout ‘Calamity.’ ”

[*Tableaux.*—ALONZO *seen struggling with his conscience ; at last he yields, and speaks :*]

“ This recent scheme, I hardly understand it;  
There ’s much more to it than I first surmised.  
It must commend itself to any bandit,  
Although, perhaps, it ’s somewhat civilized.  
But it ’s deficient in one thing I prize —  
To wit: a healthy outdoor exercise.

But still, I ’ll go and see what there is in it,  
And try an exhortation. Though unknown,  
I ’ll give them for about a half a minute  
What Prentis calls a 15-cent cyclone.  
Here in the raging Paint my blade I throw,  
And to the anti-Ingalls caucus go.

Now I can shine as in a real dime novel,  
Although not dressed in bootlegs and red plume,  
Nor robbing hen-roosts near some settler’s hovel,  
Tackling some drunken snoozer in the gloom.  
To be a statesman now to me belongs,—  
Like faro checks, I ’ll stack the people’s wrongs.

Let 's howl sub-treasury — free cash — and Pepper;

Let 's go back on our mortgages — of course —

While through our statesman's whiskers the wild  
zephyr,

The Kansas zephyr, skips with solemn force.

We 'll down 'em, and we 'll keep 'em down,  
that 's plain;

We 'll keep 'em down as long as it don't rain.

With flashing speed the pulse of evening tingles.

Lo! in the East comes the 'free-silver' moon;

Come on, come on — we 'll hoop it up to Ingalls.

We are all statesmen — let us all reune;

To this Alliance caucus let us go.

Ha! Ingalls, ha! thou meet'st thy overthrow!"

NEUTRALIA  
OR  
LOVE, PHILOSOPHY, AND WAR

[My friend's story]

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CHAPTER I

WELL! they fired upon Fort Sumter; I applied  
for a commission,  
And I got it through the efforts of a one-horse politician,  
And assumed the fearful grandeur that befitted the  
position.  
Being young, I got a detail on the staff of General  
Skubobs;  
Then I went and bought a quantity of military dubbobs —  
First, a lot of gilded buttons, feathers, shoulder-straps,  
and sashes,  
Then a little gilt-edged saber, made for cutting swells  
—not gashes;  
Then I went and bought my orderly a gorgeous coal-black charger,

For myself I bought another that was just as black,  
but larger;

Then with princely grace displayed them at the  
general's headquarters,

And I signed "By order of," to the military orders.

Now I pledge my sacred honor that there's nothing  
that could charm me

Like a detail at the office of a man who ran an army;

And, I'll tell you confidentially, I honored the po-  
sition,

And I served with much *eclat* (if you know its defi-  
nition).

Very senseless is the public, very obstinate and  
mulish,

In its reverence for trifles that are nothing else than  
foolish;

And it honors gilded buttons—makes no odds where  
it may find them —

But it never sees the person who is standing up  
behind them.

## CHAPTER II

What the world at large calls "rank" is a most  
imposing building,

An enormous pasteboard palace, decked with min-  
arets and gilding;



Sages may pronounce it empty, and the preachers,  
transitory,

But it is n't any difference as long as it is GLORY.

Go and galvanize a peddler, go and get the man a  
scepter:

Won't he rule his little kingdom just as if he'd  
always kept her?

Go and stick a lot of tinsel and some gilded buttons  
on him:

Don't the princely little notions settle suddenly upon  
him?

Yes, before this piece of tinseling, the world's ver-  
tebral column,

Ain't it bended in a manner that is comically solemn?

Go and get a third-class drayman, stupid, awkward  
as a camel:

I can wrap him up in purple, I can dope him with  
enamel;

Then I'll call the man a "monarch," and will put  
him in a palace,

And I'll peg some courtiers round him, dressed con-  
spicuously gallus;

Then I'll gamble off my raiment, that, as certain  
as I try it —

That as sure as I invest him with the potent, royal fiat,  
All the world will rush to honor him, in one convulsive riot.

As regards these sage reflections, it is very much essential

That you keep them to yourself, for I got them confidential.

Just as soon as I had heard them, off I went and bought a saber,

And resolved to go for GLORY, on somebody else's labor;

And my dreamings of the future, with their hues kaleidoscopic,

Painted me a taurine youth with a very vitreous optic.

Then unto myself I said: While these skies are so propitious,

I will go and see the elephant, and be like old Fabricius.

So I went and took a detail at the general's headquarters,

And I signed his name, and mine, to the military orders.

#### CHAPTER III

Near the post where we were stationed was a city.  
large and growing,

And its avenues and houses were with business  
overflowing;  
On the hills, beyond the echo of the fierce commercial  
scramble,  
Were the private houses builded, with magnificence  
Alhambral.

And the handsome, happy maidens, in unending  
swarms, were flocking  
Down the sidewalks, through the city, stopping, shop-  
ping, and a-blocking  
Up the pavements; while the gay boys were contin-  
ually dashing  
Through the highways, with the lightning-legged  
horseflesh they were lashing.  
I had scarcely made an entrance to my military  
station  
Ere the city balls and parties sent me up an  
invitation.  
There was one thing very certain — I was far from  
being handsome,  
But I am willing to affirm that I thought that I could  
dance some.  
And through all this vale of sorrow, I was never known  
to shirk a  
Chance to enter in the spirit of a waltz or a ma-  
zurka;

And I find by computation that I've worn out many  
millions

Of this white Wisconsin flooring lumber, dancing  
square cotillions.

Well! the gilded soldier buttons I was wearing seemed  
to blind 'em;

While unseen, unknown, and friendless, I was stand-  
ing up behind 'em;

But with many happy moments my official stay was  
flavored,

And I found myself a guest, even more than honored,  
favored.

#### CHAPTER IV

Well! there came a grand old soirée, and the city all  
attended,

And the hall was hung with flags and flowers, and  
decorations splendid;

And the chandeliers were shaded with a tissue gauze  
that sent a

Sort of sifted light—suffused with a delicate magenta.

And the splendent jewels glistened, and the ribbons  
and the laces

In the tinted light seemed floating, like the drapery of  
graces;

And the rich brocaded textures, with their rash,  
peculiar rustle,  
Roared a ceaseless, sullen bass, to the all-pervading  
bustle.

Round the room the ladies floated, in their moire  
antique and satin,  
While the men, behind large smiles, bowed to this 'n  
and to that 'n,  
And the floor was full of waltzers, and the air was  
laughter-laden,  
While the orchestra it sobbed like a broken-hearted  
maiden.

And it moaned, and shrieked, and sobbed, in a wail  
for human folly,  
While the fiddlers chewed tobacco and looked very  
solemncolly;  
Then above the caller's calling, and the wild, tem-  
pestuous chatter,  
Rose the grand combined results of the aggregated  
clatter.

It was just about this moment that I made a sudden  
entry,  
That I added to the list of the dithyrambic gentry,

And I hardly had the time to appreciate it fully,  
When a chap I did n't know said the thing was mighty  
bully.

I demanded then who HE was, and I frowned upon  
the creature;

He confessed his name was Boggs, that his father was  
a preacher;

Then inquired of me who I was, and I said I was an  
aid-de-

Camp upon the staff of Skubobs; then he said there  
was a lady

That he 'd like to have me dance with; I replied that I  
was willing,

But I thought I really needed some preliminary drilling;  
But he said it was no matter, and he thought that I  
would answer,

For the lady he would find me was a very charming  
dancer.

She would show me through the changes, if I needed  
the instruction;

Then I told him to propel with his threatened intro-  
duction.

Now, my backwardness was "stuff," for I had a cer-  
tain notion

That I simply was immense on the "poetry of  
motion."

Well! of human nature's phases, it 's the funniest and  
oddest,  
When a man of frightful cheek makes an effort to be  
modest.

## CHAPTER V

Yes, I took the introduction; Boggs alleged her name  
was Laura;  
So I made my finest bow, and I eyed the lady for a-  
Bout a half a dozen seconds; then I asked her to  
determine  
If she 'd have me for a partner in the next ensuing  
German.  
Then she smiled like the Madonna, and she told me  
"Yes" so neatly,  
That I drifted out to sea, and she captured me  
completely.

I have heard them talk of Guido, of Vandyke, and of  
Florelo;  
But I'll take my deposition that there never was a  
fellow  
Who could plaster any pigment onto canvas, or on  
paper,  
Or could ever make a picture that could ever hold a  
taper,

Or could ever be compared, as to happiness of feature,  
Or to symmetry of form, with the sunny-hearted  
creature

That was pointed out by Boggs, the descendant of  
the preacher.

Let old Virgil praise the naiads of the rapid, blue  
Eurotas,

Spokeshave dance his airy fairies on the light leaves  
of the lotus—

If you set them down by Laura they would never get  
a notice;

She had such a calm, bland way, and her tongue was  
never running

In an endless, eager effort to say something very  
cunning;

And she looked you in the eye when she spoke or  
when she listened,

And you always knew her feelings by the way her  
blue eyes glistened.

There may be a woman fairer, with more elegant  
demeanor,

With more useful information, calmer, lovelier,  
serener—

But, if there be such a woman, this deponent hath not  
seen her.



## CHAPTER VI

On her finger gleamed a diamond, with prismatic hues  
incessant,  
On her neck a string of pearls, solid moonlight,  
opalescent;  
And upon her arms two bracelets, representing sprays  
of laurel,  
With their petioles of gold and their foliage of coral.

Or, at least they say she wore them on the evening  
of the soirée;  
If she did, I never saw them—all I thought or saw  
was Laura;  
But I guess she must have worn them, for the pomp-  
ous, ugly Madam  
Parvenoodle since informed me that “old Banger’s  
daughter had ’em”;  
But that all of Laura’s jewels were much cheaper and  
much duller  
And inferior to hers, both in brilliancy and color.

Now, this Madam Parvenoodle, who disparaged  
everybody,  
Was the very beau ideal aristocracy of shoddy,  
And her husband made his money, if I am not much  
mistaken,

On a recent army contract on some ancient army  
bacon;  
And, throughout her wide acquaintance, she divided  
up her slander  
As between her friends and enemies, with most im-  
partial candor;  
And she had a way of talking so that folks could un-  
derstand her.

Well, that night has flown forever, with its floors so  
smoothly waxen!  
Gone are all those chestnut ringlets—gone those tresses  
brown and flaxen;  
Gone those stand-up paper collars—gone that faultless  
Anglo-Saxon;  
But they glitter in my fancy like the distant multi-  
hedral  
Steeple, domes, and sunlit turrets of some beautiful  
cathedral.

## CHAPTER VII

All the next day, and the next, that succeeded the  
grand soirée,  
I was crazy as a June-bug — all I thought of was Miss  
Laura;  
All the office work got tangled with the thoughts of  
“fields Elysian,”

And the ink was slung regardless of a requisite  
precision:

All the post returns got mixed, all the details and the  
orders,

Till old Skubobs made remark that our mind seemed  
on the borders

Of insanity or tremens—said he thought he could  
discover

Sad cerebral indications of the drunkard or the  
lover.

Here he tipped a knowing twinkle at the cavalry  
inspector,

Colonel Skopendyke, and Chopemup, the medical  
director.

That was well enough for Skubobs; but the sutler  
chipped in boldly

With an old azoic joke, and I told him, somewhat  
coldly,

That if any individual should start a conversa-  
tion

That would make this girl the subject of the slightest  
observation,

I would jam his *os frontalis* (that's a Latin name I  
borrowed

For a bone a person carries, I believe it's in his  
forehead).

If there's any human being that can claim my deep  
aversion,  
It's a sutler in the army. It may be a foul aspersion;  
But when moralists are satirizing avarice and  
mammon,  
Let the philanthropic skeptic who inclines to think it  
gammon,  
Watch a regimental sutler selling "bitters" and  
canned salmon.

Skubobs was a nice old man, very courteous and  
pleasant,  
Brave as a Nemean lion, in a battle omni-present;  
He appreciated fun, was a dignified old joker,  
Was a splendid judge of horseflesh, was an everlast-  
ing smoker,  
Punished ardent spirits mildly, was a perfect whale at  
poker;  
And he knew his occupation, for he'd had a life-time  
training  
In the theory of war, and the practice of cam-  
paigning.

## CHAPTER VIII

There is something in a flag, and a little burnished  
eagle,  
That is more than emblematic—it is glorious, it's regal.

You may never live to feel it, you may never be in  
danger,  
You may never visit foreign lands, and play the *role*  
of stranger;  
You may never in the army check the march of an  
invader,  
You may never on the ocean cheer the swarthy  
cannonader;  
But if these should happen to you, then, when age is  
on you pressing,  
And your great big, booby boy comes to ask your  
final blessing,  
You will tell him: Son of mine, be your station proud  
or frugal,  
When your country calls her children, and you hear  
the blare of bugle,  
Don't you stop to think of Kansas, or the quota of  
your county,  
Don't you go to asking questions, don't you stop for  
pay or bounty,  
But you volunteer at once; and you go where orders  
take you,  
And obey them to the letter if they make you or they  
break you;  
Hunt that flag, and then stay with it, be you wealthy  
or plebeian; [chant the pæan-  
Let the women sing the dirges, scrape the lint, and

Though the magazines and journals team with anti-war persuasion,  
And the stay-at-homes and cowards gladly take the like occasion,  
Don't you ever dream of asking, "Is the war a right or wrong one?"  
You are in it, and your duty is to make the fight a strong one,  
And you stay till it is over, be the war a short or long one;  
Make amends when war is over, then the power with you is lying,  
Then, if wrong, do ample justice — but that flag, you keep it flying;  
If that flag goes down to ruin, time will then, without a warning,  
Turn the dial back to midnight, and the world must wail till morning.

## CHAPTER IX

Well! to shorten this narration, and prevent undue expansion  
Of a melancholy story, I will merely say, the mansion  
Of old Banger saw me often, in response to invitation,  
As the choice, acknowledged "brute" of the "fairest of creation."

And the fairest used to send me a diurnal little  
    glyphic  
Of the hiero- variety — that demoiselle lucific;  
And to parties, balls, and concerts we did very often  
    go forth,  
And we talked of love and romance, moonshine,  
    poetry, and so forth.

By the sacred muses nine, and the elves and fairies  
    with 'em,  
You can just presume to reckon that I got to slinging  
    rhythm;  
Oh, the way I set 'em up — this young lady of Cau-  
    casian  
Antecedents, from her lover got a stated daily ration  
Of consolidated “bosh” done up somewhat in this  
    fashion:

## CHAPTER X

(Ahem!)

Am I but the sport of fancy?  
    Necromancy,  
Has she taken  
    Me in charge?  
My ideas, are they shattered,  
    So that scattered  
They forsaken

Roam at large ?  
Oh, I 'm crazy as a loon!  
For this very afternoon  
Down the street I saw her sailing like a barge

There 's a certain sort of feeling  
That comes stealing  
Over me

When around her;  
Every one has an ideal.

Is mine real ?  
Can it be,

Have I found her ?  
Is it she, is it not ?  
That 's the question I have got —  
It 's a question I am going to propound her.

Never was a knight more eager  
To beleaguer

Any town  
That was walled;

Or to batter  
Castles flatter

At the bidding of a crown  
When it called

Than am I, and I would go  
Almost anywhere, you know,



Why! I'd lay the mountains low,  
Miss my dinner,  
Catch a comet, scare an earthquake, drain the ocean;  
Crack a planet like a nut, stop the motion  
Of the sun and moon and stars, if I could win her.

## CHAPTER XI

It's a fact that's very certain, man is naturally stupid,  
And he somehow falls in love, and he lays it all to  
Cupid;  
And he goes to rhapsodizing, and his comprehension  
narrow  
Shields his idiotic folly with the allegoric arrow.

And he throws away his time, and he throws away  
his talents —  
That's the way it was with me, and I guess I'm like  
the balance;  
And he loses just that moment all his judgment and  
discretion,  
When a female little woman gets him fairly in pos-  
session.

When a man is "dead in love," the successful rumi-  
nation  
Of the plainest kind of gum is a difficult vocation.  
"Ah! this thing they call affection is a thing that's  
very shifting,"

Argued Skopendyke, the colonel, when he saw my  
matters drifting;

“I had better cut him out, better give the youth a  
lifting —

Yes, I'll break up these arrangements, for I know that  
he'll be gladder

In a dozen years from now, than he would be if he  
had her;

And I'll get the girl myself, and the wedding vow will  
pass its

Sort of warranty conveyance to old Banger's specie  
assets.”

Then he started in to do it, and he got an intro-  
duction,

And before I knew my danger he was carrying de-  
struction

On the right flank and the left, through my hopes and  
my ambitions,

And assaulting, one by one, all my salient positions.

This same colonel was a person very chatty, very  
fluent,

Full of talky-talk and smiles, and a perfect social  
truant;

He had never been contented, he had always been a  
rambler,

He was everywhere at home, an adventurer and gambler;  
He was just the style of person so successful in recruiting,  
And it got him a commission; but when bugles got to tooting,  
He skipped back and "grabbed a root"; for he could n't stand the shooting;  
He had not the slightest symptom of a shadow of a fraction  
Of a principle of honor or integrity of action;  
He had flown o'er land and sea, as a sort of human condor,  
Seeking for a girl and fortune he could pounce upon and squander.  
So, in dealing with a woman there was nothing to restrict him;  
One could never be his idol, one could always be his victim;  
And there is n't a canal that has ever yet succeeded  
In developing a mule having half the cheek that he did.

## CHAPTER XII

When the status of affairs came before my observation,  
I lit out for Laura's mansion, and embraced — the first occasion

To suggest how much I liked her; when I had her  
mind refreshed on  
That to me important topic, I propounded her a ques-  
tion:  
Would she have me? would she not? She requested  
me to bother  
That outlandish old persimmon that she called her  
DEAR, KIND father.  
Well! I tipped back in my chair — found the armholes  
of my “weskit,” —  
Stuck my thumbs in — viewed the ceiling — and —  
concluded — that — I’d “resk” it.

Old man Banger was a crabbed, overbearing cross-  
grained banker,  
And he held onto his money as a ship does to its  
anchor.  
That a poor man could be honest was a fact he always  
scouted;  
That the end of man was money was a postulate  
undoubted.  
And he worked, and tugged, and worked, with the  
grim determination  
That he’d gobble all the currency there was in cir-  
culation.  
Life for him had just two virtues, and these two he  
always noticed:

They were "Never overdraw," and "Protect your note from protest."

When I went to interview him—Laura's dear, beloved "paternal"—

There I found him in his office, in the evening, with the colonel;

And the colonel was a-bragging of the wealth that HE was wielding;

Of the real estate HE owned, and the rental it was yielding,

And he went on telling Banger how his ardent love was centered

On the blue-eyed little Laura, when I came, and knocked, and entered.

Just as soon as I beheld them, I as quickly apprehended That my goose had just been cooked, and my love affair was ended;

But I could not stop my action, it was idle to retrace it,

And although I saw my danger, I determined I would face it.

#### CHAPTER XIII

All I had to say I said; but a glimmer of discredit Overcame old Banger's features just the moment that I said it;

And he rose upon his feet, and he paced the room a  
minute,  
And he kept his eye upon me with a world of sar-  
casm in it.

“Want my daughter, little Laura! Well, I guess that  
I can answer,  
If you’ll give me just a little information in advance, sir:  
How much ‘coupons’ are you worth, how much  
‘ducats’ can you put up?  
This ‘collateral’ ’s the stuff. How much ‘assets’ do  
you foot up?  
Little Laura is expensive, and I don’t want you to  
court her  
If you have n’t got ‘securities’ sufficient to support  
her.”

Here we opened out our belfry, and replied: “Sev-  
eral dollars’  
Worth of recklessness and shape, and a box of  
paper collars.”  
And we weighed him out a chunk (on that bone  
that’s got that Latin  
Name we spoke of once before), and of course he had  
to flatten.

Then we turned upon the colonel, saying: “John,  
we’ve brought your saddle

Home and hung it on the floor." Here the colonel  
did skedaddle  
Through the door that we had opened for his egress,  
and he ran on  
Down the street, as if we'd shot him from a twelve-  
inch rifled cannon.

Then we took old Banger home in a 'bus that hap-  
pened handy,  
And we bade him an adieu on the steps of his ve-  
randa;  
And for many days thereafter Banger toted a pro-  
boscis  
That was big enough to fit on the Rhodian Colossus.

On the next day came our grief—hope showed noth-  
ing to abridge it—  
Laura wore the colonel's ring on her left, engagement  
digit;  
And we thought when we beheld her view us coldly  
like a stoic,  
That we'd go and do a something most romantic'ly  
heroic.

## CHAPTER XIV

I can give you a prescription that will always make a  
hero;

Go and get a full-fledged lover and reduce his hopes  
to zero;  
Get a man that loves a woman with devotion pure  
and steady,  
Let the woman "go back on him," and your hero is  
all ready;  
Now just turn him loose and watch him: see, old  
Cerberus, he cringes!  
See! the red-hot gates are beaten from their solid,  
brazen hinges,  
And HELL's blue platinum standards he is sabering into  
fringes;  
And he's dealing harsh percussion, with a violence  
volcanic,  
On the hacked and battered helmet of his majesty  
satanic,  
Who calls wildly on his squadrons, that are crumbling  
into panic.

I was feeling very ugly at the present trying juncture,  
And I made my mind up fully that I really ought to  
puncture  
Colonel S.'s epidermis, as a moral obligation,  
When old Skubobs got an order for a sudden change  
of station,  
And in eighty hours thereafter we were trying hard  
to plant a



Little striped piece of bunting on the bastions of  
Atlanta;  
And the vibratory roaring of the Parrot and the  
mortar  
Gave me something else to think of in the place of  
Banger's daughter,  
Who a thousand miles in safety from the carnival  
infernal,  
Was a-dreaming of the danger of her rich and absent  
colonel;  
Who not fancying the danger, got a detail of employ  
Buying horses for our army corps in southern  
Illinois.

All communities are cannon—intellect is ammu-  
nition;  
Man is simply a projectile, flung with more or less  
precision.  
And the more you jam him down, if he only has the  
powder,  
Why, the higher up he goes, and the gun it roars the  
louder.  
And the globe-sight of that cannon is a woman, and  
her station  
Is to give the rash projectile proper flight and ele-  
vation—  
To the sky or to the mud it must go at her dictation

## CHAPTER XV

Well, we whacked 'em at Atlanta — we whaled 'em,  
we flailed 'em,  
Then we raced 'em down through Georgia, till they  
did n't know what ailed 'em;  
And we sang and marched a-fighting, and we fit and  
sang a-marching,  
And we left a belt of charcoal through a country  
scathed and parching.  
But the grub gave out at last, GLORY could no more  
elate us,  
And we sighed for rice and mule-pie, and we foraged  
sweet potatoes;  
Till at last old Sherman told us: "Boys, we're just  
o-bleeged to reach a  
Little fleet of grub that's floating at the mouth of the  
Ogeechee;  
But a fort, my cherished bummers, lies between you  
and the water,  
And we've got to live on yams till you thieves have  
gone and got her;  
It's a perfect little daisy, and will have to be scaladed;  
All the parapets are steep, scarp and glacis palisaded.  
And the pathway of attack will be five-fold en-  
filaded."  
Then he turned and asked old Hazen if he thought his  
"boys" could make it.

“Make it!” said old Hazen, “make it! ain’t they just o-bleeged to take it?”

Oh, the way that we went for it! and in just a holy minute

We were through it, ’round it, under it, and over it and in it;

Oh, the way we just went through ’em — like a regiment of tunnels!

Till we struck our broad supply ships, with their fuming, fiery funnels,

And with rations on their decks, piled six yards above the “gunnells.”

“See the bummers!” said old Sherman, with most elegant emotion;

“Ain’t their heads as horizontal as the boozom of the ocean?”

Old Tecumseh then “sasha’d” in a manner very frantic.

And lean Corse, of steep Altoona, he was equally as antic:

They had finished the campaign from Atlanta to Atlantic.

Then beside the tireless ocean did we cheer the spangled banner,

And sing “Good-bye, ’Lizer Jane,” in an incoherent manner.

## CHAPTER XVI

What was little Laura doing? She was reading hasty  
snatches,  
Here and there, of grand, old battles, in the rapid  
press dispatches;  
She was looking through the papers for her rich, high-  
minded suitor —  
He, the bravo of a parlor; he, the dashing, gay  
recruiter —  
Who had gambled and kept bar from McGregor down  
to Natchez —  
It was he that she was seeking in the rapid press  
dispatches.

Then she said: "If I shall find him with the wounded,  
dead, or dying,  
It will be with FAME's bay chaplet on his manly bosom  
lying.  
So intrepid and so fearless — ah! my colonel, my  
Apollo,  
Being led by such as thou art, who is he that dares  
not follow?  
All the world shall be emblazoned with thy rash,  
magnetic valor" —  
Here she stopped to read a moment, and her face it  
blanched with pallor,

For she read a little "local," how the colonel, up at  
Cairo,  
Went and gambled off his money at a little game  
called "faro."  
With about a hundred thousand he had wisely been  
intrusted,  
So he hunted up a "tiger," and he stayed with it  
till busted;  
And he had n't bought a horse — so the colonel rose  
and "dusted."  
But they captured him at last, and they gave him  
an impartial  
Sort of trial down at Memphis, at a general court-  
martial;  
And because he fed the tiger with some cash that  
was n't his 'n,  
They contracted for his labor in a military prison.

Little Laura reads the local; not upon her taper  
finger  
Does the amethystine circlet of the colonel longer  
linger,  
But she throws it from her, shrieking — and the blue-  
eyed little dreamer,  
Swooning on the Brussels carpet, lies without a  
single tremor.

## CHAPTER XVII

Many years have passed and ended — Colonel Skop-  
endyke is buried;  
General Skubobs reached the Senate, his opponent  
being ferried  
Up a salt, salciferous streamlet in the kingdom of  
Kentucky,  
Just because his name wa' n't Skubobs, which was  
certainly unlucky.

And old Skubobs he is honest, draws his mileage and  
per diem;  
There are some who do not like him, but there 's no  
one that can buy him;  
And he 's never absent-minded, and you never see  
him walking  
Off and leave his mouth behind him in the Senate  
chamber talking.

Boggs, the preacher's son, has vanish'd; from re-  
ports, as far as we know,  
He is up in Kansas City, and a-canvassing for keno;  
Years ago, in Cowley county, with a little twelve-  
inch breaker,  
He produced a crop of sod-corn, sixteen bushels to  
the acre;

And he platted out a city, but he could n't show a  
comer

Any corners, for the grass had grown so fearfully  
that summer.

Doctor Chopemup, the surgeon, he has lately gone to  
giving

Good advice instead of pills, and he makes an honest  
living;

He has quit inspecting pulses and regenerating eye-  
balls,

And has gone to spreading tracts, and a-hammering  
on Bibles.

As he could n't save men's bodies, he assumed the  
useful task a-

Saving all the balance of 'em, up in Omaha, Ne-  
braska;

His best hold is "immortality" — he gives it to them  
monthly,

And the deacons wake the snorers when he reaches  
"twenty-onethly."

#### CHAPTER XVIII

Old man Banger is a pauper. When the banks  
began to crumble,

And the price of gold was falling, he was ruined in  
the tumble.

All his money and his courage simultaneously left  
him,  
And unceasingly he murmurs at the bad luck that  
bereft him.

Since his money has departed he has nothing left but  
timor —  
All that mercenary arrogance has gone without a  
glimmer;  
Money made him and unmade him, it was all that  
could sustain him;  
Fortune, taking it away, irretrievably had slain him.  
Now a dreary monomania is slowly o'er him steal-  
ing —  
A sort of "he-who-enters-here-leaves-hope-behind-  
him" feeling.

Any man is BRAVE with money; braver far is he  
without it  
Who dares always act uprightly, and not fret him-  
self about it.  
We should keep our faith and courage; if calamities  
assail us.  
If misfortunes swoop down on us, like the vultures of  
Stymphalus,  
It will never do to weaken, it is cowardice to fly  
them;



Do like old Troilian Ajax — strike an attitude, defy  
them.

If we waver and fall back, Fate will ever then be  
urging

Us like quarry slaves at nightfall, homeward to our  
dungeon scourging.

Madam Parvenoodle's husband is a prominent civilian—  
He has sweetened Uncle Samuel for over half a million;  
Wherefore Madam got religious, and she jined the  
church for morals,

And she prates about her Bible, and her neighbors,  
and their quarrels;

And she says she's got a Savior, and a spanking  
span of sorrels.

Every man and every woman, irrespective of position,  
Is a living, breathing romance, be they pauper or  
patrician.

Each day's doings make a pamphlet, which we bind in  
gold and velvet,

And beside preceding volumes in our memory we  
shelve it.

When at evening, tired of labor at the counter, shop,  
or forum,

In our stocking feet we saunter into memory's sanc-  
torum,

We unshelve these treasured volumes, and we silently  
look o'er 'em;  
Then we find, O fickle Hope! how you always hoid  
back from us  
Just the very things we need, just the very things you  
promise.

## CHAPTER XIX

When the work of day has ended, and the evening  
shuts the skylight,  
When the Northern Crown and Hydra stand trans-  
figured in the twilight,  
When Orion's blazing girdle gleams with hues of gold  
and lilacs,  
And around the pole careening whirls the phantom  
Arcto-Phylax,  
Oft I go to read these pamphlets, in the alcove where  
I store them;  
In the parlor of my memory, I one by one look o'er  
them.

Wars are schoolings of the nations, and the records  
ante-bellum  
Are, like palimpsests, o'erwritten in vermilion on the  
vellum.  
From the shelves I take them gently, with their gold  
and velvet covers;

One by one I turn their pages, read of heroines and  
lovers;  
Read of recklessness in man, read of constancy in  
woman,  
Read of marches and of sieges, and endurance super-  
human,  
Which the intervening years with prismatic hues  
illumine.

Then my fancies change to dreaming, and the chan-  
delier burns dimmer,  
And its rays begin to waver, with a pale, unsteady  
glimmer;  
And they wander o'er the ceiling, and the sofa, floor,  
and curtain,  
With irresolute demeanor, chilly, gloomily, uncer-  
tain;  
And they quarrel with the shadows, which they vainly  
try to banish,  
Then they gather up their forces and mysteriously  
vanish.

All at once come indications of a strange, odylic pres-  
ence,  
And the atmosphere and room teem with magic phos-  
phorescence;

Brighter grows the room and brighter, and each coming moment tripples,  
On the floor and walls the luster of the live, electric ripples.

And they stand in bold relief, every moment growing bolder,  
Till I feel some unseen fingers rest their weight upon my shoulder;  
Then I feel the thermal currents of some mild, mesmeric aura,  
And it whispers—I awaken—'t was the blue-eyed little Laura.

## ADIEU

OF the resonance of rhymes  
Future hearts and distant times  
May impress;  
Shall humanity to me,  
Like my Kansas prairies, be  
Echoless ?

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